OLD VIRGINIA DAYS AND WAYS

Reminiscences of
Mrs. Sally McCarty Pleasants
edited by her daughter
Lucy Lee Pleasants

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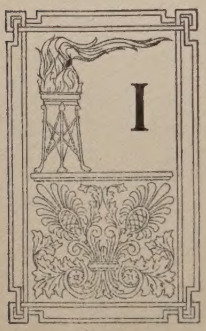
FOREWORD



I OFFER this little book as a memorial to her whose remarkable memory and unusual gift for narration have made it possible.

To her children, who owe her so much, it seems a pity that the stories in which they delighted should be forgotten, so I have tried to set them down as nearly as may be in the words in which she told them.

She embodied, we think, the grace and charm of Virginia as it used to be—the Virginia of her youth to which she was always tenderly loyal, and I shall feel well repaid for my labors as editor and scribe if I have been able, in some degree, to catch the spirit of those bygone days.

LUCY LEE PLEASANTS.

OLD VIRGINIA DAYS AND WAYS

CHAPTER I

Politics and Politicians

MY childhood was passed in Leesburg, a historic town at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Its narrow streets and closely-huddled small brick houses testify to its origin as a fort of the struggling colony of Virginia. History records that it was the principal outfitting-post of the British and Colonial forces during the French and Indian Wars, and a stone house still enjoys local fame as having been the headquarters of General Braddock, when he passed through the village on his last fatal march to the Wilderness. In this campaign it was that he cut the road now known as the Georgetown and Washington Turnpike, part of which still bears his name, a road further distinguished as the first in the world to be macadamized. Another landmark is the house where a ball was given for La Fayette. But why specify landmarks when the whole little town is glorified by the legend that in the war of 1812, when Washington was threatened by the British, the archives of the government were brought hither in wagons and deposited for safe keeping, thus

making of it, for one day, the capital of the United States?

During the Civil War, its situation in the heart of "Mosby's Confederacy" made it the scene of many a border raid and foray, but these it is not my purpose to set down. My own associations are with a time more remote, when the land was unvexed with sectional strife and Virginia still held a leading place in the government she had helped to form.

My earliest recollections are of endless political discussions. My father was an ardent Whig, and our house was for many years headquarters for the party. Being an only child I was much indulged and was often allowed to sit up with my elders when I should have been in bed. Thus I became tolerably conversant with the great questions of the day. I remember marching in a torchlight procession with a band of little girls during the Harrison and Van Buren campaign. Never was there device so impressive to a childish mind as the log-cabin with the coon on the roof. Windows were illuminated, every house was thrown open, cold collations were spread and punch and apple-toddy brewed without stint. And the stirring party airs that bands seem to have lost the trick of nowadays! The words were

not always quite equal to the tune, as, for instance,

"The log-cabin candidate will march into Washintgon
In eighteen hundred and forty-one."

But with "Tippecanoe and Tyler too" no fault could be found.

The subject of a banner for our local delegation was discussed with great excitement. The ladies undertook to prepare it and when completed, all thought it a very splendid affair. It was of satin, blue on one side and white on the other, the lower edge trimmed with heavy gilt fringe and the whole fastened with gold cords to a staff surmounted by an eagle. The blue side of the banner bore a laurel wreath, but the subject of an appropriate device for the white side gave rise to serious controversy. A local artist offered to paint upon it the Goddess of Liberty, that most popular of the dramatis personæ of the day, but as our tutelary deity is always depicted in very scant attire, an eminently respectable matron declared firmly that she would have nothing to do with a banner which flaunted the figure of a "nude female." Others were not wanting to echo this praiseworthy sentiment, so the committee decided to turn down the goddess and substitute the following motto in gold letters:

The Ladies of Leesburg
To the Whigs of Loudoun,
A Thousand Majority,
You Can and You Must.

The result presented an appearance which justified a wag in dubbing it "The Tombstone." Yet in spite of ridicule it took its place among the splendid flags that graced the inauguration of the Log-Cabin candidate and our joy and pride were overwhelming when we saw it there.

In those days as in these, election news was eagerly awaited. A tri-weekly stage plied between Washington and Leesburg, and on the brow of a very high hill which the stage had to cross, the townsfolk used to assemble to greet the messenger of the latest tidings. Local sentiment being strongly Whig, the driver, himself a Whig, would put up a small flag when he bore the news that a State had gone for General Harrison. Great was our excitement on the day when the stage displayed two flags instead of one and the eager throng were greeted with the announcement that New York and Pennsylvania had both declared for the Log-Cabin candidate.

Of Van Buren, the Democratic leader, whose nomination was supposed to be due to the influence of Andrew Jackson, it was said and sung

that he had ridden into the White House "On the back of Andrew Jack." Another campaign song had the refrain,

"Little Van's a used up man"—

a prediction fully justified by the outcome.

As is well known, General Harrison caught a severe cold while riding bareheaded through the rain from the Capitol to the White House and died of pneumonia a month after his inauguration. This tragic event was commemorated by N. P. Willis in a poem, beginning:

"Death, death in the White House!
Ah, never before
Trod his skeleton foot
On the President's floor."

If I may be pardoned for reviewing the most elementary United States history, I will here remind my readers that Harrison was succeeded by his Vice-president, John Tyler, who had been a Democrat, but who had pledged himself to carry out the principles of the Whig party. This seems less astonishing if we recall the fact that in the first days of the Republic, the President and Vice-president were of opposite parties. When Tyler became President through the death of Harrison, the Whigs naturally expected that he would redeem his pledges and great was their chagrin when it became apparent that he

intended, in the slang of a later day, to "go back on his party."

The chief issue of the campaign had been the United States Bank Bill. This was the plank in the platform which had carried the Whigs to victory in the election. All the winter little else was talked of in political circles. Judge then of the consternation and anger with which the news was received the following summer that the bill had been vetoed.

In those days the interest in politics was so keen that public events affected people as vitally as their own private affairs. I was only seven years old at the time, but the disappointment and gloom of my elders impressed my youthful spirits to such a degree that when I was asked to dance that night at the "hop" at the White Sulphur Springs, I declined, giving as my reason that "Tyler had vetoed the Bank Bill."

This perfidy on the part of the President gave rise to an incident which was widely commented upon at the time. A Virginian, with whom Tyler had been on terms of intimacy before the veto, was walking with a party of friends after a race won by the celebrated horse, Boston, when Tyler with several members of his cabinet approached from the opposite side of the track.

As soon as the President recognized his former friend, he advanced eagerly with extended hand, exclaiming,

"Why, my dear Colonel, I am delighted to see you."

To the astonishment of his companions, the gentleman addressed drew himself up and, disdaining the proffered hand, with a contemptuous gesture, replied,

"Get away, Sir, I have nothing to say to you," and passed on.

I relate this anecdote, which is absolutely true, to illustrate the spirit of the time—the independence, the hatred of falsehood and the utter disregard of place and power. The incident was published in *The Independent,* a Washington paper, short-lived but brilliant, with the editorial comment that it was the finest example of the Republican spirit that had ever been shown.

But the excitement of the Harrison campaign by no means equalled that of the succeeding one in which the opposing candidates were Henry Clay and James K. Polk. Again the little town of Leesburg was the scene of Whig celebrations and again the Loudoun Whigs rallied around the "Tombstone" banner at barbecues, glee clubs and stump speeches. The procession on Barbecue

Day was headed by a great wagon containing fourteen girls, thirteen of whom, robed in white and crowned with flowers, bore the insignia of the States which they symbolized, while the fourteenth, the tallest and most beautiful, was dressed in flags and a liberty cap to represent the Union.

Another feature which attracted great attention was a cart drawn by oxen and trimmed with garlands, in which an old lady and her three daughters, arrayed in calico dresses and sunbonnets, sat on rush-bottomed chairs playing the party airs on fiddles. Their instruments were in admirable accord and the leader, a woman of portly form and stately mien, surveyed the crowd over her spectacles with an inimitable expression of pride and self-satisfaction. And the airs she played! Even now, after the lapse of seventy years, my pulses throb and my eyes fill as some of the strains recur to me:

"Here's to you, Harry Clay,
Here's to you, my noble soul,
Here's to you with right good will,
And you shall be next President,
The chair of State to fill;
Here's to you, Harry Clay!"

Another of her songs which comes to mind is less elevated in tone. The only stanza that I can recall runs thus:

"In Lindenwald the *Fox was holed,
The †coons all laughed to hear it told,
Ha, ha, ha, such a nominee,
As Jimmy Polk of Tennessee!"

Here is the refrain of another—

"Rally Whigs, rally Whigs, rally Whigs,
Come from the East, come from the West,
North and South with glowing breast.
Rally Whigs, rally Whigs, ho!"

As glees and songs played a very important part in political campaigns of the day, it was a popular grievance, at the nomination of Clay and Frelinghuysen, that no rhyme could be found to the name of the second party on the ticket. My father overcame this difficulty when rising at a banquet he proposed this toast:

"The cure for Loco-Foco pizen
Is Henry Clay and Frelinghuysen."

Needless to say it was drunk with loud acclaim.

*Martin Van Buren thought to resemble a fox.
†The Whigs.

CHAPTER II

Early Industries

ONE of the great principles of the Whig party and the chief issue of the Harrison and Tyler campaign was the tariff. Our "infant industries" certainly needed protection then, whatever they may need or not need now that they have grown to colossal proportions, and many patriotic efforts were early made to show to what perfection home manufactures could be carried. Among the specimens of native handicraft exhibited in Washington at this time, was a rug worked with a design combining in an artistic ensemble a lion, an eagle, and a ship. It was made by a lady in the West who had spun and dyed the wool with her own hands and who was not considered unqualified for her task because she had never seen any of the objects she depicted.

Another interesting exhibit was a pair of silk gloves knit by a Virginia housewife whose husband, after raising the silk worms, spun and dyed the silk, and wound and twisted it on a reel of his own invention. These gloves were presented to

the wife of that most ardent exponent of the protective tariff, Henry Clay.

At this time it was believed to be very profitable to raise silk worms in Virginia. Large tracts of ground were planted with the mulberry tree, or *morus multicaulis*. Gentlemen set out even their lawns with it, uprooting ornamental trees to make place for it. The large open fireplaces of the planters' houses were filled in summer with the leaves, and here the insects laid their eggs, which hatched and grew in a few days from the size of pin-heads to worms an inch long. The appetite of the creatures was voracious; on entering a room devoted exclusively to their use, one would think from the noise that horses were champing their food.

Attic rooms served for nurseries, being fitted up with long tables on which the cocoons were piled in pyramids.

Unfortunately, after a fair trial, the climate of Virginia was found unsuited to the *morus multicaulis* and the vast sums which had been expended upon it were utterly lost.

As the artistic taste of the American people had not developed in proportion to their industry or their patriotism, some of the earliest products of the home manufacturer were very amusing.

I remember a counterpane woven in a pattern of wreaths of lily-of-the-valley, every blossom of which was at least as large as a dinner bell. Each of these wreaths enclosed a young lady playing on the guitar for the benefit of a gentleman who languished at her feet. The calico hangings of my grandmother's bedroom showed medallions of blue on a white ground, each medallion containing a female figure seated in regal state behind a table, to whom another female presented (on something that looked like a platter) the heads of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and other eminent patriots, the whole encircled by this explanatory legend:

"Virginia presenting to America,
upon the altar of liberty, the portraits
of her illustrious sons."

It was quite possible to carry out designs inspired by individual patriotic or poetic impulse, for every plantation had its own weaver as well as its own shoemaker, carpenter and blacksmith. While the finer wearing apparel of the planter's household was purchased abroad, everything worn by the negroes was made at home. When the New England mills began to fill the markets with cheaper wares turned out by factories, the money of the planters went into the pockets of New England, the plantation ceased to be self-

supporting, and the industrial decay of the South set in.

From the standpoint of modern attainment it is rather amusing to look back upon the primitive contrivances familiar in my earlier years.

India rubber shoes, as I remember them, were far from being the ideal foot-protection that they are today. They were made upon moulds in the shape of a last, and this last must have been dipped in the liquid rubber again and again until the finished product was a quarter of an inch thick and nearly round. These overshoes, called "gums," were tastefully ornamented with little wheels stamped in the rubber. Furthermore, they were trimmed with fur around the ankles and when the fur got wet, as it invariably did in the rain, the stockings and low shoes which were then in vogue suffered correspondingly.

The first matches that I can recall were little sticks of wax. When a light was needed one of these would be dipped in a bottle of phosphorus. This was considered the greatest invention of the age, because previously people had been dependent upon flint and steel and the tinder-box. Household fires were carefully banked at night to keep them from going out, and it was quite customary for a negro to fill his palm with ashes

and carry a coal on it for some distance to start another fire.

About this period an uncle of mine who was engaged in writing a great work on the Constitution, suffered somewhat from the fact that inspiration would insist on visiting him in the middle of the night when he had no means of recording the bright ideas which were liable to vanish before he could set them down. Keeping paper and pencil by his bedside, he would seize them in the darkness and furiously jot down sentiments and reflections which he found impossible to decipher in the morning. Judge then of his delight over the wax sticks and the bottle of phosphorus! Returning home from the city at midnight he waked his wife to show her the new invention which was so greatly to facilitate his literary labors. I grieve to be obliged to record that in spite of the matches, his valuable work never saw the light.

Whale oil is the first illuminant that I remember. It was ill-smelling and kept the lamps always dirty; consequently it never came into favor with fastidious housekeepers. Candles of spermaceti were used by the rich, and an especially beautiful illumination was produced by those made of bees-wax and myrtle berries, the

latter the product of a plant which grows wild in Virginia. The berries after being boiled and clarified, were mixed with bees-wax and poured into molds. For kitchen lamps, a saucer of grease with a floating wick of rag was considered sufficient. Astral lamps that burned lard came later into use. They were furnished with a contrivance for keeping the lard melted, and the flame yielded a lovely mellow light. On festive occasions the sockets of the candelabra would be decorated with paper cut into lacelike patterns. The lace had been previously dipped in spermaceti which gave a silvery, frostlike effect that was very decorative. A table, dressed in this way was, in the opinion of a certain old lady, quite equal if not superior to the paper shades and electric globes of the present day.

When the wax candle donned its lacelike frills, the floor was waxed and polished to a high degree of slipperiness, and adorned with garlands of flowers drawn in chalk. In dancing the dancers demolished the garlands, but they also distributed the chalk and made it possible to cut the pigeon-wing and other flourishes without danger to life and limb.

CHAPTER III

Colonial Times

AMONG my earliest recollections is the account my grandmother, Mrs. Thomas Ludwell Lee, née Fanny Carter, used to give of her girlhood at Sabine Hall in Richmond County, Virginia.

Her brothers and male cousins were sent to England to College, but as the higher education for women had not then been even thought of, a scant knowledge of reading and writing was considered sufficient for her. She had a very active mind, however, and a great love of reading which could not be satisfied by her father's library of Greek and Latin books, but some old volumes of *The Rambler* and *The Spectator* read by her until she knew them by heart, furnished a not injurious mental pabulum.

Her father's estate, Sabine Hall, lay along the Potomac River and, like all the other river plantations, had its own dock from which it loaded its own crop of tobacco on the little schooners which plied to Norfolk and back. The tobacco was shipped to England by Norfolk merchants who

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trafficked directly with the planters, merchants who were glad to take orders from the Virginia belles for brocaded gowns, hats trimmed with bugles, and silk stockings and perfumed gloves to match every costume. Great was the excitement when a schooner appeared at the dock with its invoice of London finery.

The fashions of the period have been naively described in a series of letters, written in 1782, which passed between a Miss Lucinda Lee, a cousin of my grandmother, and a Miss Polly Brent, also a connection of this family, during a visit paid by the former to her relatives the Lees and the Washingtons who lived in lower Virginia. These letters, intended solely for the eyes of Miss Lee's correspondent, were printed nearly a hundred years later in a small volume and sold for the benefit of the Lee Memorial Fund. They contain an account of a round of gaieties in which the writer took part.

Let us dip into them for a little local color.

"Sept. 20, 1782.

They are come to tell me a Mr. Grimes and his lady are come to wait on us. I must throw down my pen and go down to be introduced. I shall have but little time to smart myself. Adieu." My Great-Coat shall be my dress today.

Sept. 21.—Today we return Mrs. Grimes' visit. I am going to wear my straw dress and my large hat; Sister wears a blue habbit with a white sattin scirt. Adieu."

This "habbit" must have been an especially fashionable and recherché garment for it figures at a number of social gatherings. "Cousin Hannah" is described as wearing "a lead colored habbit, open, with a lylack lutestring scirt" and, on her head, "a butifull crape cushion ornamented with gauze and flowers." At another time she wears "a blue lutestring habbit, taffety apron and handkerchief, with the most butifull little hat on the side of her head" that the writer "ever saw."

The manners of the time, too, are thus artlessly recorded: "We have supped and the gentlemen have not returned yet. Lucy Gordon and myself are in a peck of troubles for fear they should return drunk. Sister has had our bed moved in her room. Just as we were undressed and going to bed, the Gentlemen arrived, and we had to scamper. Both tipsy!"

And again:

"Hannah and myself were going to take a long walk this evening but were prevented by the two horrid mortals, Mr. Pinkard and Mr. Washington, who seized me and kissed me a

dozen times in spite of all the resistance I could make. They really think, now they are married, they are privaleged to do anything."

This "Mr. Washington" seems to have offended on several occasions. I quote from another letter:

"Today we were in the garden mighty busy cutting thistles to try our sweethearts when Mr. Washington caught us and you can't conceive how he plagued us, chased us all over the garden and was quite impertinent." She goes on,

"I must tell you of our frolic after we went in our room. We took it into our heads to want to eat; well, we had a large dish of bacon and beaf; after that, a bowl of sago cream; and after that an apple pye. While we were eating the apple pye in bed—God bless you! making a great noise—in came Mr. Washington, dressed in Hannah's short gown and petticoat, and seazed and kissed me twenty times in spite of all the resistance I could make; and then Cousin Molly. Hannah soon followed dressed in his coat. They joined us in eating the pye and then went out. After this we took it into our heads to want to eat oysters. We got up, put on our rappers and went down in the Seller to get them. Do you think Mr. Washington did not follow and scear

us to death? We went up, tho' and eat our oysters."

In spite of these vagaries on the part of Mr. Washington, he seems to have been a very satisfactory husband. The writer comments thus on his relations with his wife:

"Mr. Washington returned today from Fredericksburg. You can't think how rejoiced Hannah was and how dejected in his absence she always is. You may depend upon it, Polly, this matrimony alters us mightily. I am afraid it alienates us from every one else. It is, I fear, the bane of Female Friendship."

The letters from which the foregoing extracts are taken give a delightful picture of life in the Old Dominion at this early day. The ladies and gentlemen eat figs and peaches under "butifull shade trees"; the "chariot" seems to be always at the door to take them for an airing; they dine at each other's houses and "pore tea" in the afternoon; on one occasion are invited to sip the fragrant brew with a gentleman who has "a new cargo" just arrived. In the evening they dance a minuet, and once, when the old man who played "the Fidle" was sick, they diverted themselves with "Grind the Bottel and Hide the Thimble." On rainy days they read *Evelina*, or *Telemachus*,

and showed each other the "new cloaths" they had received from London.

Miss Lucinda is evidently very fond of reading. In what old library, long superseded by successive Best Sellers, do you suppose one could find a "new Novel" lent by "Mrs. A. Washington," entitled *Victoria?* She writes, I "can't say I admire the Tale though I think it prettily told." Again, "I have been very agreeably entertained this evening readding a Novel called *Malvern Dale.* It is something like *Evelina* though not so pretty. I have a piece of advice to give you," continues this moralist of seventeen, "that is to read something improving. Books of instruction will be a thousand times more pleasing than all the Novels in the World."

That she carries this precept into practice is evidenced on the next page: "I have entertained myself all day reading *Telemachus.* It is really delightful and very improving."

In another place she says, "I have for the first time read Pope's *Eloiza.* I will give you my opinion of it: the poetry I think is butifull but I do not like the sentiments. Some of Elioza's are too Amorous for a female, I think."

Mr. Pinkard reads aloud to her the *Belle's Strattegem,* and Mr. Newton, who was present,

must have dozed, for on being asked the name of the play, he replied *The Country Cousin,* whereat Miss Lucy nearly burst with laughter.

Poor Mr. Pinkard! She discovers that he is interested in her cousin Nancy, and makes this heartless comment: "He got his discard yesterday," but in spite of "discard" he continues to take part in all the merry making.

Not long after, Cousin Polly comes to propose dressing him in women's "cloaths." That day, after the beaux were supposed to have departed, Nancy and Lucinda had a fire built in one of the upstairs rooms and were busily engaged in conversation when Mr. Pinkard bolted in upon them. He had overheard part of their talk which "hily delighted him." We are not surprised at this when we learn that the topic of their conversation was "regretting the manner in which we had spent our past lives."

Alas, that the serpent of worldliness should enter this Eden where every page breathes love and kindliness and innocent fun! Lucinda looks forward with delight to seeing "Flora," but let her voice her own bitter disappointment.

"They returned and as I expected brought Flora with them. She is very genteel and wears monstrous Bustles. Her face is just as it always was. You, my dearest, that possess a great deal

of Sencibility, would have supposed she would have been delighted to see me—far from it. I assure you she saluted me as if I had been a common acquaintance. I suppose it is fashionable to affect indifference. I hope, my dearest, *we* shall always stear clear of such unnatural fashions."

Was Lucinda a bit of a prig? Else why, at the age of seventeen, does she make these edifying moral reflections?

"How prefarable is good sense and affability to beauty! More pleasing a thousand times!" and "I would not have you think that I pay no attention to the opinion of the world; far from it: next to that of a good conscience the opinion of the world is to be regarded."

In these pages she all unconsciously reveals her qualities. She is prompt at a literary criticism but it takes her all day to make a cap. She has much to say of the other girls' beaux, but only once does she allude to her own when she observes naively, "Mr. Beal was also of the party, and Nancy sais she could almost sware that he is my slave."

I close the slender volume with the feeling that no history of the period could portray the manners of Virginia in 1782 as does this artless, girlish narrative.

CHAPTER IV

Domestic Affairs

MY grandmother, Fanny Carter of Sabine Hall, who was a contemporary of the Miss Lucinda Lee from whom we have been quoting, married Thomas Ludwell Lee of Coton and came down to breakfast on the morning after her wedding in a "queen's nightcap," an elaborate structure of muslin and lace which completely covered her beautiful auburn hair. From that morning, not long after her sixteenth birthday, to the day of her death at the age of eighty, she was never free from the thraldom of caps.

She became the mother of a large family and the mistress of many slaves. In spite of the isolation of the plantation, she fell a victim to smallpox. When her husband, who was absent at the time of her illness, saw her for the first time after his return, he fainted with the shock of her altered appearance.

At the age of thirty-six she was left a widow with eleven children. According to the custom of the period, my grandfather had "gone security" for his brother-in-law, but on his deathbed he told his wife that he had settled that debt

as well as all others and had left the vouchers in a certain drawer in the library. Immediately after his death she placed these papers in the hands of her lawyer. Judge of her sensations when suit was brought against the estate for payment of the security debt! The vouchers and receipts had mysteriously disappeared from the desk of the attorney to whom they had been entrusted and could never be found. The estate was thrown into chancery and remained tied up in the courts until my grandmother died, in poverty, embittered by misfortune. One wonders nowadays that these important papers had not been recorded in the proper county offices, but possibly the modern system of records did not then exist in Virginia.

Social life in my grandmother's day must have been almost exactly like country life in England of the same, or, perhaps an earlier period. Fox-hunting was a favorite pastime. The planters would assemble in turn at each other's houses to partake of a heavy hunting breakfast before setting forth. A dish held in high esteem was a pie baked at Christmas and not cut until Twelfth Day, or "Old Style Christmas." A peck of flour went to the making of the crust which was three feet in diameter. It was filled with boned fowls

of every kind from a chicken to a turkey and included birds, small and great, pheasants, partridges, robins and even the tiny sora. By the time it came to be cut the gravy had become a jelly and the different flavors so blended that the result was a delight to the palate.

The mention of a peck of flour reminds me of an anecdote which I have heard my father tell of his childhood. His aunt, Miss Molly McCarty, was a spinster six feet tall for whom some wag wrote this epitaph:

> "Here lies Miss Molly McCarty,
> Always complaining, but always ate hearty,
> She lived to the age of three score and ten,
> And died an old maid in spite of the men."

Once my father and his ten brothers were sent to pay her a visit of duty. She welcomed them affectionately and at once invited them to stay to supper. Sending for her cook, she gave this order which the children overheard:

"Minerva, I want you to get out a pint of flour and make some very nice biscuits."

The hungry guests, who had never heard of less than a peck of flour being used for this purpose, fell into such an uproarious fit of laughter that the good lady, much incensed, packed them into their carryall and sent them home again.

Of late years the idea prevails in some quarters that Southern women are careless housekeepers. As to this I cannot speak with authority, but I know that the ladies of my mother's and grandmother's day ordered the affairs of their great households with care and skill. I have often heard my grandmother laugh over a mishap that befell her in her younger days. A relative who enjoyed the reputation of being a too good housekeeper, invited herself to spend the day. My mother, knowing her inquisitive ways, had the house put in immaculate order from attic to cellar. Nothing, she felt sure, had been omitted that could possibly invite criticism, but so anxious was she that even after the visitor had arrived at the door she sped upstairs again to satisfy herself that all was as it should be. Imagine her dismay when she discovered in the closet of the guest-chamber a disreputable old coat which her husband sometimes wore in bad weather on his rides about the plantation! What to do with it she could not think. Already she heard footsteps in the hall and the little hubbub of greeting. Then came an inspiration. Mounting a chair she dropped the offending object behind the deep cornice that surmounted the wardrobe. After the elaborate dinner had gone off without a hitch, the guest

feigned a desire for sleep and my grandmother, secure in the safety of her hiding place, conducted her to the "charmber." Time passed and she did not emerge. When tea was served, the hostess went in person to summon her and a light tap being unanswered, softly opened the door expecting to find her still asleep. To both her amusement and chagrin, she beheld the immaculate housekeeper standing upon a chair, her nose elevated in an unmistakable sniff, holding at arm's length the disreputable old coat which she had fished from the hollow behind the cornice of the wardrobe.

Besides sewing, knitting and weaving, these old-time matrons took pleasure in concocting dainties that won them at least local renown. Their pickles, preserves and brandy-peaches were widely celebrated and it was said that every Virginia housewife boasted of possessing the only infallible recipe for curing a ham. The "Old Yellow Pickle" was another delicacy not to be found elsewhere in equal perfection. Weeks were required for its preparation and years for its maturity. Baby cucumbers, onions, ears of corn and cauliflowers were scalded day after day in brine and exposed on trays in the burning sun until sufficiently cured for the addition of oil, vinegar and spice.

Delicious conserves were similarly prepared by paring ripe peaches in circles from the stone, scalding the luscious spirals in syrup and spreading them on dishes in the sun.

I have in my possession an ancient cookery book called the *Virginia Housewife,* which was written by a Mrs. Randolph of great local celebrity. This manual is bound in calf and its pages are yellow with age. Although every recipe is warranted infallible, it has fallen into disuse through the extravagance of its demands. The formulas, commencing as they frequently did, "Take a quart of the richest cream that can be procured," or "Break into a clean dish two dozen perfectly fresh eggs," were calculated to daunt the least economical cook.

That the Southern woman of the past should be a good housekeeper was a necessity forced upon her by circumstances without regard to individual taste. Her large family, the immense retinue of slaves who all had to be fed, clothed and nursed, not to mention the incessant and heavy demands of hospitality, made her the real burden-bearer of the community.

A characteristic fashion of the period was the custom of visiting for months at a time in the families of relatives and friends. My grand-

mother would pack her five younger daughters into a coach, and with driver, postilions and maids go merrily off to spend the winter with her sisters and married daughters in Lower Virginia. When summer came these visits were duly returned.

So popular and so universal was this custom, that it was currently related of one young couple that they started on their wedding tour and continued their round of visits until nine children had come to bless the homes of their friends. It is needless to say that every last family which they honored with their society would cheerfully pay their expenses on to their next stopping place.

Another authentic instance is of a guest who came to spend the day and stayed for thirty years.

CHAPTER V

Family Legends

FOR years the slave-ships had come from Washington to Alexandria and Dumfries with their cargo, the planters going to these ports to choose such slaves as they needed for work on the plantations. My grandfather, whose estate of Cedar Grove lay just below Mount Vernon, on the Potomac River, once accompanied some friends on board a slaver just arrived in port. He had not intended to make any purchases, but his attention was attracted by a tall and handsome young woman whose great melancholy eyes followed him wherever he went so persistently that at last he divined she was making some sort of appeal to him. When he was about to leave the ship she approached, threw herself at his feet and clasping his knees made him understand that she wanted him to buy her. Struck by her manner and unable to resist her entreaties, he paid her price and embarked with her on the little vessel which was to take him home. On reaching the shore, she took from her mouth a large bead of soft red gold and pressed it into his hand. Later, after she learned to

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speak English, she told him that she had been a princess in her own country and wore a necklace of these beads. At the time of her capture the string broke and she had been able to save only one bead. This she kept in her mouth during the voyage. My grandfather had the bead made into a ring which became a treasured heirloom in the family. Inside it was inscribed the motto;

"The royal slave
Freely gave."

The heroine of this story was taken into the household of my grandmother and became her favorite maid. She is said to have been six feet tall and remarkably comely. In due time she married one of the men on the plantation and distinguished herself by giving birth to triplets. My grandfather called these boys Shem, Ham and Japhet, and told their mother that if she would rear them to manhood she need never do any other work. He gave her a cabin in the orchard near the great house and there she raised fruit and chickens, being called upon for service only when there was sickness in the house or unusual domestic stress. She lived to a great age and her sons were highly valued servants on the plantation.

In those days slavery was not a "question" at all. Most of the slaves, indeed, were brought into the ports of New York or Boston and afterwards sold to the South. Of course the evils that grew out of the institution were very serious, but in the times and in the families of which I write it seemed a natural part of the patriarchal system of the great plantations, and was, moreover, justified by Scriptural example. Cases of cruelty were extremely rare in Virginia and were never spoken of without horror. Such discipline as the negroes required fell to the lot of the overseer, and as in certain factory towns nowadays it might be thought impolite to discuss child labor, so it was then considered bad taste even to mention the name of a negro trader.

In later years, Virginia, as lying nearest the border, received many visits from emissaries of the abolition party, and a good many negroes ran away and took refuge in Canada, the only place where they were safe from being captured and restored to their owners. These things happened before the passage of the Free Soil Law which conferred freedom on every slave who set foot in a non-slave holding State.

One of my earliest recollections on this subject is the escape of a negro named Vincent with his

wife and nine children. Vincent, himself free, was a very respectable man who worked as a hostler in the hotel in Leesburg, the county seat. Many lawyers repaired thither to attend the courts and with these guests and others he became a great favorite for his faithful service and obliging ways. Besides his regular wages he received many presents of money, for it was generally known that he was trying to get together a sufficient sum to buy his wife and children. Their owner had agreed to sell them for fifteen hundred dollars, but after Vincent, by hard work and rigid economy, had succeeded in collecting the amount, the former refused to fulfil his promise on the ground that Vincent's wife was so valuable to him as a cook that he could not let her go.

When this became commonly known the black man's white friends expressed strong indignation and a great deal of sympathy, but there seemed to be no remedy for the situation. Vincent continued to work at the tavern, keeping his own counsel.

One morning of the following winter, Mammy, my nurse, came into my mother's room where I slept, to make the fire and when answering the usual questions about the weather, my parents noted her very peculiar manner and expression

of countenance. After she went out my father said, "Mammy has heard some news that she wants to tell." At breakfast an excited neighbor came in to say that a rumor was abroad that Vincent had disappeared with his entire family. For days no other topic was talked of. Scouts were sent out to bring back the fugitives, letters were written in every direction and men posted along the route which it was supposed they would take. But no slightest clue rewarded the search until about a week later, when a carryall and pair of horses were found at a stopping place on the other side of the river with a note from Vincent enclosing the hire of the vehicle and horses, explaining that he had taken them to transport his family thus far, and begging that they be returned to the tavern to which they belonged. Several months later a letter came saying that the whole party had arrived safe in Canada. The disappearance of eleven people out of a community seems the more remarkable when one reflects that there were no railroads at the time and that the country was so sparsely populated that the arrival of a large family in any place must have attracted far more attention than it would cause at present. The fugitives had to depend entirely on the chance of finding friends to help them.

They must have been obliged to conceal themselves during the day and to travel by night, planning their course by the compass. We who gaze nightly with indifferent eyes upon the North Star can scarcely realize how much it must have meant to the poor slave whom it lighted to freedom.

Mammy's only remark upon the subject is a curious commentary upon the way the institution was regarded by the negroes themselves, and their perfect acquiescence in it:

"Well," she said, "it serves Mr. M—— right. Vincent wanted to go in *honor.*"

Another, and more agreeable incident, illustrating the relations between master and slave, occurred in the family of my husband's grandmother, Mrs. Eustace of Staffordshire. I have often heard my husband tell the story just as I now set it down.

The estate was heavily encumbered and the number of negroes out of all proportion to the size of the plantation. To remedy the situation my grandmother's lawyer advised her to "hire" out as many of the slaves as possible, and a dozen or more of the likeliest were sent to work in the coal pits in Chesterfield County. Among them, amid tears and lamentations, went Castor and

Pollux, the twin sons of Mammy Lily, Mrs. Eustace's cook and factotum. Mammy Lily was six feet tall and possessed a vigor of mind in keeping with the size of her body. She ruled everything in the household; no one dreamed of disputing her sway. A few weeks after the departure of Castor and Pollux, rumors were heard that they were receiving harsh treatment in the coal pits. My husband, a little boy at the time, remembers that Mammy Lily cried and that his grandmother spent many hours in prayer. Then came the news that Castor and Pollux had run away. A large reward was offered for their apprehension and the country round Mrs. Eustace's plantation soon swarmed with people searching for the fugitives, it being conjectured that their devotion to their home would bring them back to it. A searching party that actually invaded the Eustace kitchen was driven off by Mammy Lily with blows and abuse. My husband says that about this time strange noises would be heard late at night and that when he had to go on an errand in the evening the fear of ghosts would send him flying along the dark passages. One morning the ghosts turned into very substantial flesh and blood when Mammy Lily threw open the dining-room door and dramatically

announcing, "Mistis, here's your niggers," ushered in the delinquent Castor and Pollux who had been concealed for a week or more in the closet under the stairs.

They were not sent back to work in the coal pits in Chesterfield.

CHAPTER VI

True and False Nobility

I INHERITED from my father about twelve hundred acres situated in Loudoun County on the Potomac River, about twenty miles from Washington. This is all that is left to the family of a tract granted to Daniel McCarty in 1660 or thereabouts (I have forgotten the exact date) by Lord Fairfax and Lady Suffolk, who in their turn had received it from Queen Anne. This tract embraced a strip of country extending from Broad Run to Sugar Land Run, and covered parts of several counties. The family seat of the McCartys was at Cedar Grove, in Fairfax, fourteen miles below Alexandria. At this point the Pohick and Accotink Creeks pour their waters into the Potomac, making it nine miles wide. From the porch of Cedar Grove on a clear day one could look across this wonderful expanse and with a glass make out famous Gunston Hall, the home of George Mason, framer of the Bill of Rights and signer of the Declaration of Independence. My grandfather, Daniel McCarty, whose mother was a Miss Ball, a near relative of Washington, married a daughter of George

Mason of Gunston, and from her I inherit one of the pear-shaped diamond rings which she sent to London to buy for her three daughters. This ring invariably attracts notice whenever it is worn, both for its antiquity and its intrinsic beauty. The stone is placed over silver foil (formerly supposed to enhance the brilliancy of a gem) in a setting of wrought gold, is surrounded with rubies and surmounted with a little coronet of rubies and diamonds.

My grandmother McCarty had, as I have said, ten sons and one daughter. When they all grew up Cedar Grove became the scene of continued frollicking. Fox hunting was a favorite pastime, especially of Daniel, the eldest son. So do our predilections decide our fate! One day when the chase had been unusually long and hard, he became separated from his companions and followed the quarry, until after many doublings and windings, it ran unexpectedly into the wooded lawn of a gentleman's house. Daniel rushed after in hot pursuit to find himself confronted by a beautiful young woman in whose arms the fox had taken sanctuary. With flashing eyes she dared him to touch it and he instantly divined that the little animal must be a pet in the family.

Confused and contrite he threw himself from his horse and, hat in hand, stammered his apologies. Alas! the fox got the better of the hunter that October day, for Daniel was so hard hit that he never rested until he won the spirited damsel for his wife. The temper, however, which had seemed so charming in the maid proved less attractive in the spouse, and many tales are told of her violent and unreasonable behavior. Poor Uncle Daniel died before he was forty and his friends were accustomed to say in speaking of him that in chasing a fox, he had caught a *vixen.* His widow married a Captain Saunders who, after her death, wedded Mrs. Fairfax. This lady was grandmother of the present Baron Fairfax who now resides in England in full enjoyment of his title which has been acknowledged by the British crown.

Of the Fairfax family in Virginia much has been written. They lived at Greenway Court, and the title they might not bear in Virginia was tacitly acknowledged in the consideration which they received.

In a later generation Donald Fairfax, who remained on the Northern side during the Civil War, distinguished himself by the part he played in the capture of Mason and Slidell, representa-

tives of the Confederate government. Gossip relates that on that occasion Mathilde Slidell slapped her captor in the face.

In no country of the civilized world does more simplicity of manners exist along with perfect breeding than in Virginia. Social position is entirely independent of money; manners are inherent, being inherited like eyes or complexion, not to be laid off and put on like clothes. This local peculiarity is illustrated by the following incident which made a deep impression on me at the time.

The old dancing master who had taught me to dance, and may have given my mother lessons for all I know, formed a class to which I sent my children. All the neighborhood came thither, attracted by the ravishing strains of his fiddle, and among the rest two sun-burned, bright-eyed, bare-foot boys answering to the name of Dulaney.

"Why Sonny," asked the teacher of the oldest one, "where are your shoes?"

"We forgot 'em," answered Hal, laughing up in his face and twisting one bare foot around the other.

"Tut, tut," said the old man. "You must run home and get 'em; I can't teach you to dance without shoes."

A smile went around the room, for the boys who had come to dancing school without shoes were the orphan sons of my cousin, Rebecca Dulaney, whose inheritance of a great English fortune might have furnished a plot for Thackeray. Her father on coming of age found himself nearly penniless, and having no business to attend to at home, accepted an invitation to visit his relations in England. As he had been highly educated and possessed, moreover, great charm of person and manner, he made a favorable impression upon them all, but especially on a cousin who had been a hopeless and helpless invalid for many years. Rosier, as kind-hearted as he was handsome and clever, devoted a great deal of time to her, feeling himself repaid by her conversation which evinced a rarely cultivated mind. Under the new interest in her life her health began to improve. One day he startled her by the suggestion that he believed she could walk if she would make the effort. At first she refused but was finally persuaded to try. With the aid of his arm she succeeded in taking a step or two. He encouraged her to persevere until she learned to walk again, finally recovering her health completely. She was much older than Rosier and there was nothing but friendship between them,

but in her gratitude to the lad for restoring her to health and happiness she made a will leaving all her property, amounting to about twelve hundred thousand dollars, to his oldest daughter—in the event of his having one—provided that the child should bear her name, Rebecca. There was a further proviso that the namesake, when she married, should forfeit the inheritance unless her husband took her surname, Dulaney.

My cousin Rosier returned to Virginia, married and in due time welcomed a little Rebecca. The English Rebecca had in the meantime married Sir Richard Hunter, to whom at her death she left only a life estate in the property which she had promised to her cousin's daughter. When Lady Hunter died Sir Richard wrote to inquire what sum would be considered adequate in this country for the education and maintenance of a young lady of Rebecca's station, and upon being informed immediately settled the amount upon her.

The proviso insisting that her husband should take her name made her marriage rather uncertain until her cousin, Richard Dulaney, fell in love with her, and thus name and fortune were happily united. Fabulous tales circulated when, along with money and securities, the household

effects were sent to the heiress. To my certain knowledge ten wagon-loads of plate came to Rebecca from her English inheritance. I have seen an entire dinner-service of silver with spoons and forks so heavy one could scarcely lift them, besides countless little sets which in this day we would call "individual," consisting of tiny teapot, sugar-dish and cream pitcher, probably used for the informal English breakfast.

The enthusiasm with which traveling foreigners were welcomed led more than one impostor to take advantage of the innocent credulity of American society. One summer when we were staying at Bedford Springs in Pennsylvania, the guests were thrown into intense excitement by the arrival of an Italian nobleman, who attracted attention by his handsome person and distinguished bearing as well as by the number of jewelled orders and decorations that he wore. Of course all received him with open arms, and not a little envy was excited among the young ladies and their mothers when he began to pay marked attention to a beautiful heiress. My father admired the young lady too, in a paternal way, and one night accepted her mother's invitation to come and inspect her appearance before she should start for a ball. She was beautifully

dressed in white, but it startled him to see the bosom of her gown almost covered with foreign orders and decorations. After praising her appearance in all sincerity, my father added:

"Now, my dear, I am going to take an old man's privilege and be perfectly frank with you. You do not know anything about this young gentleman except what he has told you. By wearing his decorations you compromise yourself and invite criticism. So, if you take my advice—and of course you are perfectly free to reject it—you will not wear these things which do not make you look any lovelier, but will wait to put them on until you know more than you do now."

The young girl reflected a moment before she answered: "You are quite right, Colonel; I ought to have thought of that myself," and in spite of her mother's protests, she unfastened the decorations and laid them off. A few days later the nobleman disappeared from Bedford Springs, nor was it long before the people whom he had duped learned, with the news of his arrest, that he was a valet who had rifled his master's jewel casket and had been masquerading in his master's clothes.

That same summer we made the acquaintance of the ex-Empress of Mexico, known, in Ameri-

can society as Mrs. Iturbide. She was very plain, very dark, and careless in her dress. She lived at that time with her family in Georgetown, and in later years interesting things befell them. It was her grandson whom Maximillian adopted and chose as the heir of the Mexican throne. When Maximillian was shot, the child's mother learned indirectly that he would be taken to Italy to be educated in a monastery. She started at once for Mexico, and arrived only to hear that the vessel bearing her son had already set sail. But learning also that it would make a brief stop at Havana, she followed on to Cuba, appealed to the American consul there for assistance, and got it. The Consul accompanied her on board the ship, where, asserting her rights as the boy's mother, she took him almost forcibly from the Roman Catholic Priest who was carrying him to Rome.

The child was brought to Georgetown and grew up in the same household as his little cousins. The neighbors told amusing stories of his imperious bearing; how he expected the other children to wait upon him, and would stamp his foot and fly into a passion if thwarted. When he grew to manhood he went to Mexico and volunteered in the army there. Of his subsequent fate I never heard.

CHAPTER VII

Some Country Damsels

MY mother's name was Anne Lucinda Lee. Until her marriage she lived at the family seat of Coton on the Potomac. Often has she told me that her childhood was ideally happy. In summer she with her sisters played all day long in the garden where they made baby-houses under the low branches of the old pear trees. Their dolls were of wood, cunningly carved and painted. My mother's had blue eyes and yellow hair like her own; Aunt Fanny's, like its little mother, was a brunette with brown eyes and raven curls. My mother's doll must have been made of scented wood, for she always smelt a sweet and pungent fragrance when she kissed her.

In winter they went to school to M. Mongrand, their tutor, an old French *émigré*, who had found an asylum in Virginia. For their amusement in bad weather, they danced or played battledore and shuttle-cock in the long corridor.

They were taught to knit and sew at a very early age, nor is it surprising that they were fine needlewomen when we learn that their mother put a pencil-dot to mark the place where every

stitch should go. I have in my possession a quilt-square made by my cousin, Anne Fenton Brent, when she was but five years old, which is sewed together with a skill I have never seen surpassed.

The girls wore low-necked white cambric frocks and red morocco slippers all the year round, in spite of the fact that Virginia winters are often intensely cold for weeks at a time. The only other fabrics then in use for dresses were silk, bombazine, and a woolen material called "stuff." Printed cottons were introduced later. One of my uncles, who was an importer, gave my mother a book of cotton samples of beautiful designs, which she thriftily sewed into a patch-work quilt.

When the sisters, of whom there were five, grew to woman's estate, Coton became the objective point of the beaux of several counties. They married early, and each girl after her marriage dropped her maiden appellation and became "Sister Brent," "Sister Carter," "Sister Ringgold," or "Sister Maffett," as the case might be.

There was little gaiety in rural neighborhoods in the way of balls and dancing parties. The only formal entertainments were dinners, or "dinings" as they were called, to which the guests came in the forenoon, partook of a lavish mid-

day meal and remained until dark. In the afternoon the ladies withdrew to the upper rooms while the gentlemen remained below to smoke and talk politics. A little negro footman was always in attendance with a tray of glasses containing apple toddy, sangaree, or mint julep (fragrant, and tinkling with ice), and the order to "walk about," frequently given, meant that he should proffer these refreshments at short intervals to the guests.

In this connection I am reminded of a story which my father was very fond of telling of a French gentleman. He was invited to one of these Virginia banquets and regaled with some seductive compound of which nutmeg was an ingredient. After many rounds of the beverage, the Frenchman drew my father aside and whispered to him:—

"Mon cher McCarty, I have fear that I am dronk. What was in de ponch dat you gave me?"

"Why, let me see," said my father; "there was rum"—

"No, I have drunk rum biffor; it wass not rum."

"And sugar"—

"No, it wass not sugar."

"And water"—

"No, I have often drink water."

"And nutmeg"—

"Ah, it wass dat nootmeg! I have not had nootmeg biffor; it wass dot nootmeg dat made me dronk."

If gluttony is one of the sins to be ascribed to the Virginians of an earlier day, it is probably because there were so many good things to eat. In this favored clime all the fruits and vegetables of the temperate zone grew in abundance. The woods then were full of game, the rivers and bays, of fish. One of my friends who lived in the tide-water region on the coast used to send her cook with a basket to the bottom of her garden to get oysters, crabs, lobsters or clams. For dessert she could gather figs, peaches or grapes. A gentleman dining with her was told that the pepper and salt were the only ingredients of the sumptuous meal which had not been produced on the plantation.

When I was a girl I visited at a country house where broiled goslings were served for breakfast. Partridge eggs were one of the delicacies upon which we feasted now and then. As many as twenty-four eggs were sometimes found in a single nest, but as the bird would not return to it if it had been touched by the hand, a long-handled

tin ladle was provided for removing the eggs and was used for no other purpose.

To return to my grandmother's menage where meals succeeded each other in the English routine. Five o'clock tea was served every afternoon in the drawing-room or the garden and at nine the family repaired to the dining-room to partake of a "hot buttered loaf" with preserves or fresh fruit and rich milk ladled from a china bowl into glasses.

As the girls grew up each one in turn had a season in Washington. My mother and Aunt Fanny were formally introduced into society by Mrs. Dolly Madison, at one of her own levees, as "specimens of Virginia ladies."

For street wear that winter the sisters had long pelisses and chinchilla caps. Fanny's pelisse was of yellow silk, Lucinda's of blue, and both were trimmed of swansdown. It is needless to say that the wearers have left a reputation for beauty which their descendants have never attained.

The gloves of the period, my mother told me, were remarkably fine and soft. She was presented by an admirer with a pair folded in an English-walnut shell which was lined with green silk and laced with silken cords.

In that day, as in these, excessive slenderness was the mode, and a young woman disposed to

embonpoint would wear only a linen chemise under her silk gown. No wonder these pretty dames paid for imprudence in youth with inflammatory rheumatism in age. With this scant costume married ladies wore turbans of colored gauze, sometimes ornamented with a jewel. One of my relatives had a turban of *coquelicot* gauze trimmed with gold lace, and another, a blonde, one of silver gauze adorned with a white ostrich feather.

The wearer of the *coquelicot* turban must have possessed much of the enterprise which is supposed to be distinctively characteristic of the present day. Hearing that the young man whom she had decided to marry was visiting in Alexandria where a beautiful rival was spending the winter, she mounted her horse behind a man servant, and taking her wardrobe in saddle-bags rode thither through bitter weather and captured him out of hand.

This lady became in her age such a martyr to rheumatism that her limbs were twisted completely out of shape. Her little hands were like bird-claws and her knees were drawn up to her chin. A terrible itching afflicted her which she said was in the marrow of her bones, and she used to endeavor to allay it with a little carved ivory

hand fitted to a long whalebone handle which a sailor relative had brought her from China.

A curious episode of about the same period was the reappearance of Cousin Adelaide Brent after having been lost sight of for years. She had gone to Louisiana and married there, but owing to a quarrel regarding the division of the property, she had become estranged from her family and so much time had elapsed since she had been heard from that her relations supposed her dead. Then one day a lady announcing herself as Adelaide Brent, took a house in the neighborhood and gave out that she had come back to prove her right to a larger share of the paternal estate than she had received.

Always had Adelaide been eccentric, so this conduct was quite in keeping with her character. As a girl she was very handsome, with red hair and a dazzlingly white skin. The other claimant, an elderly woman at this time, had red hair also and the remains of a fair complexion. The new comer showed considerable familiarity with local conditions, talking freely about things that had happened in her youth; but her supposed girlhood friends who, actuated by sympathy or curiosity, called upon her came away with a feeling of distrust and the suspicion that the woman was

not really Adelaide Brent. At last the brother, with whom she had held communication only through a lawyer, went to see her and at once pronounced her an impostor. After remaining in the neighborhood for some time, she disappeared as mysteriously as she had come, leaving the family unanimous in the conclusion that she was some maid or companion who, resembling Cousin Adelaide in height and general appearance and having heard much of her antecedents and early life, thought it would be feasible to personate her and put in a successful claim to her inheritance.

CHAPTER VIII

Fire-Eaters

MY father possessed in a high degree those qualities of honor, courage and generosity with which our imagination endows those who bear "without reproach the grand old name of gentleman." He was about six feet in height, had black hair, an aquiline nose and remarkably bright, piercing eyes. So well trained in athletic exercises was he that in his youth he could walk under a horizontal bar, turn and jump over it. I have been told also on good authority that he could take a fifty-pound weight on each little finger and crack them together above his head. He had an excellent memory, a ready wit and an inexhaustible flow of spirits.

Though he was by taste a politician and by inclination a rover, after leaving college he took up the study of law. Our country in those days offered great opportunities for profitable investment and the young man went on long journeys hither and thither looking for lands. Once with a bowie knife and an Indian guide he journeyed to Wisconsin where he took up government land at a number of places which afterwards became

the sites of flourishing manufacturing towns, among others, Milwaukee. There at one time he owned five hundred lots in what is now the most desirable part of the city.

Of his adventures with the Indian guide he told some amusing stories. My father must have exercised the same charm of manner upon the aborigines which he exerted on other people, for they became very fond of him, and on one occasion invited him to a feast made in his honor. While on his way to the place of meeting accompanied by Jake, his guide, he noticed that Jake, instead of being cheerful and chatty as usual, seemed sombre and taciturn, but he was hardly prepared for the sudden question:

"Colonel, do you like dog meat?"

"Why no," said my father, "I'm not particularly fond of it."

"Well, it's all you'll get there," said Jake.

My father, knowing that his hosts would be deeply offended if he did not appear at their banquet, feigned a sudden indisposition and returned to his boarding house. When the Indians, according to Jake's prediction, postponed the feast to come to inquire after the white man, they found him in bed groaning terribly. The feast was indefinitely postponed and my father, for the nonce, escaped eating dog-meat.

Once he was detained a whole winter in Natchez, Mississippi, because transportation homeward had failed him. In the dearth of other amusement he played cards with several choice spirits of the town. Now in those days playing cards invariably meant what nowadays we call gambling. A strict account of the winning and losing was kept on both sides and when the time for my father's departure arrived it was found that he had won several thousand dollars. On the last evening of their stay they met to settle up their accounts. Vouchers and securities for the amount were duly handed him.

"Gentlemen," he said, rising, "I have spent a winter with you; I have accepted your hospitality; I have enjoyed your society, and I have not come here to rob you of your money." So saying, he held the papers in the candle and burned them to a crisp.

He married Miss Lucinda Lee of Coton, after strenuous opposition from her family and friends on account of his part in a duel. This duel has since become one of the most celebrated in the history of the code in America. An account of it has been published time and again, and to this day papers with a little space to fill will reprint it.* It is generally in a version so incorrect that

*Only last winter it appeared in the *New York Herald* (1911).

it seems only fair that I should now set down the truth.

The story related to me by my father runs, to the best of my recollection, as follows:

A difference in politics was the cause of quarrel between him and his second cousin, General Armistead Mason, his antagonist in the duel.

Mason was a violent Democrat, my father an equally violent Federalist. Mason was a candidate for some office and my father registered his first vote against him. Mason challenged his right to vote on the ground that he was not yet of age, and insulted him by compelling him to make oath that he had passed his twenty-first birthday. After the oath was taken he called him a "d—d perjured scoundrel." My father thereupon knocked him down and the fight had made considerable progress when they were forcibly separated by the bystanders.

Mason sent McCarty a challenge at once, which was, of coures, accepted, but friends and relatives interposed to keep the peace and the matter was, as my father supposed, finally settled. After a year had elapsed, however, General Mason, acting under advice of political friends, one of whom was General Jackson, wrote to McCarty saying that he was not satisfied with

the termination of the affair and desired to settle it with a duel. My father consented, claiming the right to name the terms, as the challenged party. One can scarcely wonder that they were not accepted. His first proposal was that they should fire across a handkerchief; his second, that they should sit together upon a keg of gunpowder and touch it off with a match; his third, that they should leap, bound together, from the dome of the Capitol in Washington. It seems that he was in deep despair over the miscarriage of his love-affair and had no desire to come out of the encounter alive. When all these propositions had been refused by Mason's friends, McCarty told them to name their own weapons. Mason, an old soldier, chose muskets. McCarty then asserted his right to name the distance and made it so short that the muzzles of the gun-barrels almost met.

The meeting took place at Bladensburg, Maryland, in February, 1819, at daybreak. Although it was snowing and very cold, McCarty appeared stripped to his shirt and trousers. Mason wore a heavy overcoat. Both fired at the word and my father's ball entered Mason's heart, killing him instantly. Mason's shot tore the flesh of McCarty's forearm from elbow to wrist, leaving a scar which he carried to his grave.

When Mason's body was examined two wounds were discovered besides the bullet which caused his death. McCarty's enemies at once accused him of foul play, charging that his weapon was improperly loaded, but upon further investigation my father was acquitted of any dishonorable action. It was discovered that McCarty's ball had grazed Mason's elbow and fractured it, carrying two splinters of bone into his side.

After the duel, finding it intolerable to remain in Virginia where his conduct had alienated his sweetheart's family and established a bitter feud with some of his relations, he went to New York and enlisted with a body of troops that were being sent out to fight Bolivar. On the eve of starting, however, he was seized with a brain fever occasioned by the terrible strain he had undergone, and lay unconscious with delirium while the ship sailed without him.

His mother, after undergoing tortures of anxiety, discovered his whereabouts and sent his brother William to bring him home.

Still a semi-invalid (very interesting, I doubt not) he discovered, while cooling his heels in Washington, that Miss Lucinda Lee was to be a guest at a party to which he was invited. He went to the party but dared not approach her.

While he feasted his eyes, at a distance, upon her loveliness, he noted that she was being urged to sing and heard somebody say that nothing suited her voice like the melodies of young Mr. Thomas Moore, which were then the rage. Still he was not prepared for the transport that filled his soul, when there fell from her lips these ravishing words:

"Come rest in this bosom my own stricken deer,
Though the herd have all left thee, thy home is still here!"

Can you wonder that he felt encouraged to propose?

This duel, though it cast no shadow over his life, made him nevertheless a marked man. He regretted it greatly and threw all of his influence against the practice, never afterwards losing an opportunity to make up a quarrel.

In this connection I will relate an incident that occurred to him in middle life. Going to New Orleans on business, he took lodging at the Verandah Hotel. He was a stranger in the city but his name on the register attracted attention and he made some acquaintances in the office with whom he spent a delightful evening. When bedtime came, being very tired with his journey, he said good-night to his companions and taking his candle proceeded along the verandah on which

the windows of the office opened. As he neared the staircase a gentleman approached him from the opposite direction who seemed to be observing him with interest. As my father was about to pass he was accosted by this stranger.

"You, I believe, Sir, are Colonel McCarty of Virginia?"

"I am, Sir."

"I am Colonel K—— of Louisiana. You, I understand, are accounted the bravest man in your part of the country, as I am of mine, and, frankly, I'd like to measure swords with you."

My father, much astonished at this address, fixed his eyes upon his companion and replied:

"I have just arrived in your city, Sir, and am unacquainted with its customs. Am I right in understanding you to say that you wish to fight me—a man whom you have never seen before and with whom you can have no cause of quarrel?"

"You apprehend my meaning, Sir," said the Louisianian.

"Very well," replied my father, "I have never refused a challenge, although this one seems to me most extraordinary. I will meet you tomorrow morning at daylight, at any place you may appoint. As the challenged party, I claim the right to name the weapons, and I choose pistols."

He was highly indignant and the expression of his piercing eyes must have been very remarkable, for the Louisianian turned pale and fell back a pace.

"Good God, Sir," he exclaimed, "It seems as if you would look me through the brain."

"I will *shoot* you through the brain tomorrow morning at daylight," replied my father with great emphasis, "and I shall wait in my room for your second to make arrangements for the meeting."

"Why, Colonel," exclaimed the bully, "you take this too seriously. I was only jesting, a harmless jest, Sir, to try your mettle."

"I have no taste for such jests, Sir," replied my father coldly, "and I decline all further conversation with you." Turning away, he proceeded to his room, but before he reached the staircase he heard from the office the sound of laughter.

Much shocked by this encounter, he wrote a letter to my mother and put his affairs in such order as the short time left him permitted. Then he took off his coat and shoes and threw himself on the bed for an hour's rest before dawn. He slept heavily. When he awoke the sun was streaming into his room. He looked at his watch and saw that it was nine o'clock. Dressing in

haste, he descended to the breakfast room expecting to find there some news of the Colonel K.'s messenger. To his astonishment his appearance was greeted with a shout from his acquaintances of the night before, who all crowded about him.

"You have backed down the greatest bully in the State, Sir," they cried, "and we owe you a vote of thanks for it. Colonel K—— left for parts unknown this morning at daybreak and it is likely to be a long time before he shows his face here again."

On his way back to Virginia, my father met with another adventure.

He traveled naturally upon a Mississippi steamer, the great river in those days being the main highway of traffic. These boats were frequented by desperadoes and gamblers who beguiled the passengers into playing cards with them and then cheated them out of their money.

My father was enjoying a quiet game with two men of his own sort, when one of these gentlemen of fortune approached and proposed to join them. It was explained to him politely that the party was satisfied as they were and did not care for a fourth. The intruder insisted and proceeded to make himself very objectionable—cursing, swearing, even drawing a knife. The players, rather white, looked at each other. They

were unarmed and it seemed that they would either have to admit the fellow to their game or get into an ugly scrimmage. Suddenly my father, still holding his cards, arose, seized the desperado by the collar, walked with him to the side of the boat and flung him over into the stream. Returning to his seat, he threw down an ace, observing quietly,

"My trick, gentlemen."

This story was told me long after my father's death by a man who heard it from one of the other participants in the game.

"The bully was never heard of again," he observed quietly, "but as the Mississippi is a shallow stream at some seasons, he probably swam or waded ashore."

There is nothing that appeals to me more than the spirit which animated these fine old Southern gentlemen, a spirit which they must have inherited from their knightly ancestors.

Two noticeable figures of the Richmond of an earlier day were Patrick Coutts and Colonel Gamble. For the latter, Gamble's Hill (one of the seven on which Richmond is situated) was named.

When Colonel Gamble was nearing his end, word came to him that the hours of Mr. Coutts

also were numbered. He sent a servant with this message: "Ask Mr. Coutts to wait for Colonel Gamble a little while, as he would like to go along with him."

To this the dying man replied, "Say to Colonel Gamble with my compliments, that Patrick Coutts, booted and spurred, waits for no man."

CHAPTER IX

Education

GIRLS' schools were kept for the most part by "decayed" gentlewomen with little training for their calling. My first teacher was Mrs. Haggerty, an old Irish lady of high family and connections, whose fallen fortunes obliged her to work for her living. Me she treated with great consideration, telling me that I belonged to the "royal race of Desmond," a statement that I discredited at the time but have since found to be based on the fact that my father's ancestor, Desmond McCarty, before being defeated and dispossessed by Fitzgerald, was king of the counties of Cork and Desmond in Ireland. I am less proud of my royal lineage, however, than I am of the fact that Daniel McCarty, founder of the family in this country, was a President of the House of Burgesses, the first legislative assembly ever held in America. He was the original of Thackeray's Henry Esmond, the name Esmond being derived from the estate of Desmond, the Irish contraction of the Norman *D'Esmond.*

In this connection it may not be amiss to relate the legend of the McCarty crest. The device is

a mailed hand grasping a lizard, and the motto, "Forti et fideli nil difficile," which I like best in its English translation, "To the brave and faithful nothing is difficult."

The story of the motto goes back to that remote antiquity when Ireland, or probably some small part of it, lay waiting to be claimed by bold explorers. McDermott and McCarty, setting forth simultaneously upon this project, agreed that whoever first touched the soil should possess it. McCarty's keel first beached the sand but McDermott in a frenzy of wrathful envy, smote off his own left hand with his sword and flung it on the land. McCarty leaped from his boat and seizing a lizard that had just run out of its hole held it up in token of possession. Thus neither established a clear title and that portion of Ireland passed into other hands.

At Mrs. Haggerty's school I studied Olney's Geography, Murray's Grammar, and a blue-covered book entitled "Speller and Definer." This ancient work begins "A-g-e, age, any period of time." This I remember glibly rendering, "A-g-e, age any pyramid of time," going on without pause or correction to—

"A-l-e, ale, malt liquor; A-i-l, ail, to be sick."

Although by no means a backward child, I did not learn to read until I was five years old. I was

so mortified on this account as to fret myself into a fever. The precocity of old-time children seems to us nowadays little short of marvellous. My brother John could read the Bible at the age of three. James was considered very backward because he did not read until he was four, although he knew his letters and pointed them out before he could speak. James was a very delicate child who had to be carried a great deal. One day my father was holding him upon his shoulder, when some acquaintances stopped to chat. The child, attracted by a handbill affixed to a lamp-post near by, began to read it aloud to the astonishment of the group.

Boys when of sufficient age went to academies where they were prepared for college. Gentlemen of an earlier day were sent to Oxford and Cambridge, but my father went to William and Mary, which enjoyed a high reputation for learning in his time.

Country people sent their children to the "Old Field School House" generally kept by some brilliant classical scholar who had taken a B.A., but whose Greek and Latin had not helped him very much in the struggle of life. I have heard my father say that in approaching one of these old field school houses one would think he was

nearing a "bee tree," so continuous was the murmur of voices reciting or studying aloud.

Owners of large estates, owing to the isolation of their plantations, were obliged to employ tutors and governesses and the rod was the only argument used to convince a pupil of the desirableness of learning. This custom led to much cruelty. One of the tutors at Cedar Grove once beat my father—then six—in the hand with a ferule until the child, taught by his Virginian code of honor that it was cowardly to utter a complaint, fainted with the pain. For some trifling piece of mischief this tutor flogged another pupil until his back bled.

My father's mother, who was left a widow at the age of forty, had ten sons. In addition, she adopted the two little boys of her dead sister. They used to say that so many babies were crawling about the floor of her room in the morning that she had to stand on a stool to dress her hair. There being a nurse for every baby, however, the situation was not quite so intolerable as it seems. Of course, these children must have schooling, preferably at home. It is reasonable to suppose that the tutor of twelve boys would have his hands full. Moral suasion had not yet come in fashion.

The young McCartys, goaded to fury by injustice and cruelty, held a council of war. It was of no use to appeal to their mother; she felt herself in duty bound to support the teacher's authority. The only plan that satisfied their sense of justice and at the same time would avenge their wrongs was to give the tyrant a taste of his own medicine. But this plan required some outside help to carry into execution. Their assistant and friend in every enterprise was a young negro named Demas, who had been a playmate and body-servant to the whole brood. To him they confided their scheme. The plan was to cut a number of stout hickory switches and conceal them in the schoolroom. When the teacher should enter on Monday morning the door would be locked, then, at a concerted signal, all the boys would set upon him in a body. The switches were long and keen; they had been well tested; every one of them would split the bark off a tree. Demas had grave misgivings, for he knew his young masters well enough to be sure there was little hope that the detested pedagogue would come out of the ordeal alive, so he betrayed the plot and helped him to escape.

When school-time arrived the teacher failed to appear, and it was long before anybody knew

what had become of him. Years afterwards Demas confessed. He had helped the tutor to carry his effects to a little boat that lay at the bottom of the garden, had rowed him along Accotink Creek until they reached the Potomac, where he had put him on board a fishing-smack and left him to find his way home to the North.

Even under more favorable conditions, however, I fear that my father would never have been a "teacher's pet." Later he went to a boys' school which is now known as the Georgetown College. If the pupils at this institution became refractory, they were "horsed"; that is to say, fastened on the back of a gigantic negro who got down on all fours to receive the culprit. In this position the boy was flogged to the Queen's taste. An under-master named Boler was in charge of these punishments and one of his protégés acted as spy, tell-tale and general informer. One day my father, having good reason to know that he was to be horsed after school hours, armed himself with a bandy-stick, but though he kept very carefully in the background, the spy discovered him and called out, "Here he is! Here's Jack McCarty! Run, Mr. Boler; run, Mr. Boler," whereupon Mr. Boler appeared promptly to take the offender in charge. Jack exclaiming, "No,

you don't, Mr. Boler!" lifted his bandy-stick and whacked the pedagogue in the face with it, and in the ensuing turmoil made good his escape, only, I suspect, to receive the punishment with interest later on.

This foolish Jack found out from a fellow pupil whose father kept a book store that several handsome volumes had been bought by the faculty as prizes for scholarship and that he—Jack —was to receive one of them. Whereupon he boasted of his good fortune, and this indiscretion, together, perhaps, with some of his escapades, coming to the ears of his teachers, they unjustly decreed that he had forfeited the prize. My father was very angry, but he lay low and kept his own counsel.

The great feature of the closing exercises of the school was the play of *Barbarossa.* Jack was to take the part of Barbarossa. When the time came for the performance, the principal actor did not appear. In hot haste a messenger was dispatched to summon him. In one of the upper rooms, apparently absorbed in a book, sat the young man.

"Why, Jack," cried the breathless messenger, "why don't you come down? The play's all ready to begin as soon as you get there."

"I am not going to play Barbarossa tonight," he replied quietly.

"Not going to play Barbarossa? But you must! You've got to. Nobody else knows the part. Come along, Jack, don't keep all the fathers and mothers in Georgetown waiting."

But Jack was obdurate, nor could entreaties move him. At last the principal himself came to argue, even to implore. The boy replied that he was going home the next day not to return; that he didn't care to take the part and considered the matter ended.

Barbarossa was the much-advertised feature of the evening. If the refractory conduct of the chief performer should get out it would reflect seriously upon the discipline of the school.

"Is there nothing that will induce you to do it?" asked the principal at last, in desperation.

"Yes," said Jack, "there is. If you will go before that audience and tell them that I have earned a prize and that you have withheld it unjustly, I will play Barbarossa, but not unless you do."

So the faculty made an explanation that was satisfactory to the wounded pride of Barbarossa and the play came off.

The school days of my mother were much more tranquilly spent than those of my father. M. Mongrand, an abbé forced to leave France during the Reign of Terror, took up teaching as a means of livelihood. The office, a small detached building such as was provided on every estate for the transaction of business, remained unused at Coton on account of the death of the master. It was turned into a schoolroom and here the old emigré lived for seven years, teaching his pupils a good deal of French and a little English. He loved the household of his adoption and gave the girls pretty French nicknames which characterized them according to his fancy. Winifred, the studious, was "La Bonne"; Betsy, the sleepy head, "La belle Doremuse"; Fanny, the beauty, was "Vénus." With his many virtues Mon. Mongrand was quick-tempered, and insistent as to all his rights as he regarded them. He was very fond of peaches and cream and the story is told that on one occasion when a sudden severe thunder-storm prevented the servants from carrying him the second course of his supper, a violent knocking was heard on the door and M. Mongrand appeared bare-headed in the rain, demanding angrily, "Why you no bring me my payches?"

When peace was restored he returned to his own country to live and die happy in his old parish; but my grandmother thought that his happiness was somewhat clouded by reason of his inability to convert her and her family to the Roman Catholic faith.

I, myself, some thirty years later, went to a boarding school kept at Belmont by Miss Margaret Mercer, one of the most accomplished women of her day. In addition to her service to her school, she interested herself greatly in public work, and one of the schemes to which she devoted much time and more money than she could afford was the colonizing of the negroes in Liberia.

Belmont had been the family seat of the Lees before Mr. Ludwell Lee, becoming bankrupt in his old age, was forced to sell it. It was, and is still, a fine Elizabethan mansion built of Colonial brick brought from England. Two long corridors, originally "covered ways," but since enclosed and lighted with arched windows, led to kitchen and pantries on one side and to classrooms on the other. In these corridors on rainy days the girls used to dance, and play battledore and shuttle-cock.

The great upper chambers were converted into dormitories, each furnished with five double beds

accommodating ten girls. For toilet purposes a round table in the middle of the room served; on this five basins were ranged around a bucket of water provided with a dipper. In winter we broke the ice for our scanty ablutions.

At meals a rigid abstemiousness was inculcated; it would have been considered the acme of bad taste to ask for a second helping of anything. In winter, butter was served in very small pieces and no girl could get more than her allowance. One Sunday, after the chicken had been made to go as far as possible, my neighbor at table was served with the carcass, which had the deceptive appearance of being a liberal helping. Lifting her hands she exclaimed in boarding-school French, "Oh, ma chère, ma chère!" To which I replied, enviously, "I think it's more than your share."

Contributions to the bill of fare were, to speak in moderation, kindly welcomed. Two New Orleans girls used to receive from home every winter a barrel of oranges, a box of pecans and a cask of delicious syrup which they called "sero." The syrup was put on the table but we could never get as much of it as we wanted, so we used great ingenuity in contriving to get enough bread and butter to eat with it in our

rooms at night. Slice after slice we slipped surreptitiously into aprons and handkerchiefs at table, and at nine o'clock when the lights were out, we would rise stealthily and heat our stolen provender on the top of the wood stove. Will anything ever again smell or taste as good to me as that bubbling sero and that hot buttered toast?

CHAPTER X

A Dilettante Poet

IMPROMPTU verses were by no means rare in our society; indeed, much talent was allowed to lie dormant, or was squandered on social occasions, which now would find a ready market in the magazines.

My uncle, St. Leger Landon Carter, was a poet of some ability. His "Mocking Bird," in spite of defects of construction has a haunting and lyric quality which makes it worthy of quotation here:

"Come listen, Oh, list to that soft dying strain
Of my mocking bird up on the housetop again.
He comes every night to these old ruined walls
And soft as the moonlight his melody falls.
Oh, how can the bulbul's or nightingale's chant
In the climes which they love or the groves which they haunt,
Be more thrilling and wild than the songs I have heard
In the stillness of night from my sweet mocking bird?

"I saw him today on his favorite tree,
Where he constantly comes in his glory and glee,
Perched high on a limb that was standing out far
Above all the rest like a tall taper spar.

The wind it was wafting the limb to and fro
And he rode up and down like a skiff in a blow
When it sinks with the billow and mounts with its swell;
He knew I was watching, he knew it full well.

"He folded his pinions and swelled out his throat,
And mimicked each bird in its own native note,
The thrush and the robin, the redbird and all,
And the partridge would whistle and come at his call.
Then stopping his carol, he seemed to prepare
By the flirt of his wings for a flight in the air;
When rising sheer upward he wheeled down again
And took up the song where he left off the strain.

"Would you cage such a creature and draggle his plumes,
Condemn him to prison, that worst of all dooms,
Take from him the pleasure of flying so free,
And deny him his ride on the wind-wafted tree?
Would you force him to pine within merciless bars
When earth is all sunshine and Heaven all stars?
Forbid it, ye Powers, and grant him the boon
Of a sail in the sun and a song to the moon."

This poem with others was printed in a little book called *Nugae by Nugator,* which reads for all the world like the *Gentleman's Magazine.*

I have always felt a great sympathy for this poet-kinsman of mine. His were the scholarly tastes, the playful fancy, the vague aspirations, which so often spell loneliness and disappointment for the possessor.

His character is unconsciously betrayed in a letter dated February 14, 1847, and addressed to his brother-in-law, William Brent, at the latter's country seat of Palermo, near Alexandria, Virginia. It begins—

"Your letter filled my eyes with tears by awakening recollections of our former days. I would I could attain your happy condition of faith and trust in Heaven, but I cannot. As I have lived a careless being, so shall I die. It is too irksome to my nature to be good, and when in Heaven *you* shall join the sainted spirits of our dear ones, tell them how much I adored a virtue I cannot attain. But this is too serious a vein for me—I shake it off, or rather let it out—that is, the vein.

"Palermo! Ah, you are in Sicily comfortably established on your little Sabine farm enjoying the *otium cum dignitate,* how far to be preferred to a wide domain or sterile fields which 'cheat with hope the husbandman who sows.' Why did you not call it Sabina and invite me to drink with you some good old Falernian?

"I would gladly add to the adornment of your Palermo, as you suggest, but I have no young fruit trees now. Budding and grafting have passed away with me. I never could stick to anything long, and now being disappointed in my

dearest hopes, I have given up all schemes for improvement and take a sort of pleasure in the dilapidation that surrounds me. I like to see a gate off its hinges and a wall tumbling down. There is a luxury in seeing other things decay as well as one's self. At this very moment my house leaks, my stable walls are giving way, my garden gate is broken, my orchard gate is prostrate, and I have strictly forbidden all repairs.

" 'It suits the funny habit of my soul.' "

"The wide domain of sterile fields" to which he refers was the estate of Cleve on the Potomac, near Fredericksburg. The house was and is still a fine brick mansion. The spacious entrance, then called "the saloon," was so lofty that I as a child felt myself dwarfed to the proportions of a fly. The upper hall was formerly used as a picture gallery and filled with family portraits.

In one of the rooms stood an old spinet which had been played upon by the belles of Queen Anne's day. One night at the eerie hour that precedes the dawn, a terrible screech resounded through the echoing chambers of Cleve, a wail so wild and unearthly that it curdled the very marrow in the bones. I have neglected to mention the family ghost—no family mansion of any pretensions would be without one. Loyally

accepting the ghost theory, no one made any investigation, only whispered the story to one another with blanched cheeks and staring eyes. Then, accidentally, somebody opened the door of an unused apartment and there under a heap of fallen plaster—plaster that had been brought from England a hundred years before and fastened to the rafters with heavy-headed nails, lay the crushed form of the old spinet whose jarred strings had given forth their last sounds. In spite of this rational explanation of one of the supernatural happenings at Cleve, my Uncle Landon continued to believe in ghosts, or to pretend that he did.

Requiring a considerable sum of money which he could not take legitimately from the revenues of the estate, after long deliberation and acute distress of mind, he decided to sell a splendid avenue of trees which formed the approach to the house. Always interested in new inventions, he was especially impressed about this time with the daguerreotype, then greatly in vogue. The sacrifice of his trees must have affected him more than he realized, for descending to his cellar one night for a bottle of wine, he distinctly saw, daguerreotyped on the wide stone floor, the huge trunks and waving branches of every one of his stately

trees. Dropping his candle with a scream, he fled upstairs and could never be induced to enter the cellar again. (The only thing that has ever shaken my loyal belief in this legend is that tradition does not state whether it was the first bottle of wine or the seventh or eighth which my brilliant uncle was seeking in the cellar.)

Another experience which I used to love to hear him tell was the story of "Black Hawk." He had been spending the summer at Bedford Springs and had made many friends among the guests. Being an especial favorite with ladies, there was great lamentation when, toward the close of the season, he announced that he must go. On the day of his departure he came to the breakfast table looking haggard and worn. One of his fair friends commented on his appearance, when my uncle explained that he had passed a most wretched night, for a dog had stationed himself under the window and barked for hours, and that every time he barked he distinctly uttered the words,

"Black Hawk! Black Hawk!"

This created a good deal of merriment. In the midst of the laughter the conveyance that was to take him away drove up to the door. In those days stage coaches were named just as sleeping cars are now, and great was the consternation of

the company to read on the side of the huge coach in large gilt letters the words, "Black Hawk." All clustered immediately about my uncle and begged him not to go, declaring that his dream must have been an omen of evil and that the dog had been sent as a warning. In vain; he replied that his plans were all made and that he had important engagements to meet. So he made his adieux with mock solemnity and departed.

The coach bumped and thumped for hours up and down the mountain side. At noon they stopped for dinner at a tavern where the driver accompanied his meal with huge draughts of mountain whiskey with which he also filled his pocket flask. The weary passengers climbed back to their places, the road grew worse and worse, and the already intoxicated driver drank at short intervals from his flask. Presently they reached a place where recent rains had washed the earth away, leaving frightful gulleys. At one point the road was so narrow that it seemed impossible for the coach to pass.

The passengers protested and fell into an altercation with the driver who was now too drunk for prudence. Striking the horses with his whip, he drove the stage over into the ravine and my uncle remembered too late the unheeded warning of "Black Hawk."

CHAPTER XI

Gallantry and Repartee

IN my younger days "gallantry" was much more in vogue than at present. Ladies, especially when young and beautiful, were the object of respectful and chivalrous admiration. It has been since said that chivalry was an institution which enabled a man to protect a woman from everybody except himself, but in the days of which I write such heresy was unknown. Men took pride in their devotion to "the sex" and thought it no shame to offer themselves and be rejected. It was said of a cousin of mine whose ardent temperament led him to propose to every pretty girl he saw, that he had been discarded from the Rappahannock to the Lower James, and it is related of a gentleman who had made an offer for the hand of a young lady which was respectfully declined, that he exclaimed indignantly to her father,

"I assure you, Sir, that I have been refused by some of the finest young ladies in the State."

This temperament on the part of the men developed a species of belle which, I believe, has never been equalled elsewhere. If a girl chanced

to be young, beautiful, vivacious and, moreover, the heiress of a great estate, there was positively no limit to her sway. It was considered perfectly legitimate for her to secure as many proposals as possible, and I have known more than one Virginia matron who, although wedded early, boasted of having received seventy-five offers of marriage.

Of course, with such a code it would be considered a great stigma to remain single, while to pass the age limit of twenty-five unmarried was a thing to be spoken of with bated breath. A lady described to me once the tragic and violent death of her sister. After expressing sympathy, I asked if she were married. The lady replied—

"No 'm, she never married. She had a great many offers but she never would marry."

"How old was she when she was killed?" I ventured to ask.

"Eighteen, M'm."

Given ample fortune, youth, high spirits and good looks, love-making, when involving no responsibilities becomes an agreeable pastime, and very naturally would it find expression in poetical quotation or in original verses written on the spur of the moment. Byron and Sir Walter Scott were on everybody's tongue.

When my father first proposed to my mother she refused him. He carried his grief to a dear friend and confidante who tried to comfort him.

"Come, Jack," she said, "don't give up hope. A woman's 'No' often means 'Yes.' I'm sure she loves you in spite of everything!"

"Ah, no," he replied sadly,

> " 'There shot no glance from Ellen's eye
> To give her steadfast speech the lie.' "

Quickness in repartee was the natural outcome of a social system where society was the chief business of one's days and conversation the chief interest. A dashing and handsome officer of a militia regiment in his uniform of green faced with white and trimmed with gilt braid and buttons, was talking one day to some young ladies when one of them exclaimed archly,

> "Ah, Captain! 'Green and white,
> Forsaken quite.' "

Laying his hand on his heart he replied quick as thought,

> "But green and gold
> Will still be bold."

My father, riding a long way to visit his lady-love in windy March weather, wore a pair of green goggles to protect his eyes. When he went home he forgot them and a friend returned them with these lines:

"McCarty is so much in love,
That when he goes away,
He leaves his eyes behind, by Jove!
To gaze another day."

To this my father replied promptly—

"You ascribe to me the lover's sigh;
True, I adore the lasses,
But much prefer the naked eye
To gazing through green glasses."

His facility in rhyming was so well known that he was frequently challenged to make rhymes to impossible words. Many years later a young lady dared him with the two Mexican volcanoes, Popocatapetl and Iztaccihuatl. He immediately replied that if she ceased to smile upon him he would

"Leave the world and settle
On snowy Popocatapetl,
Or quaff his solitary bottle
On yon tall peak, Iztaccihuatl."

In connection with repartee I am reminded of a story of John Randolph of Roanoke, which I believe has never been printed.

Randolph had had a bitter disagreement with my husband's cousin, John Hampden Pleasants, member of Congress from Virginia. The streets of Washington, at the time, were a succession of mud-holes and over an especially bad one a nar-

row plank had been laid for a crossing. Pleasants, going to his office one morning, descried Randolph approaching from the opposite direction. He saw that they must meet upon the plank and felt that this was the opportunity to force the quarrel he desired. Stepping into the middle of the foot-way he folded his arms and as Randolph came up said belligerently:

"I never make way for a d— puppy."

"I do, Sir," Randolph replied in his high, squeaky voice, and stepping out into the mud he picked his way through it. Pleasants told the story on himself, adding that he laughed all the way to the Capitol over his own discomfiture.

At the time of the Greek struggle for independence, Mr. Randolph went to call upon a lady in Philadelphia who was warmly interested in their cause, and like Mrs. Jellaby, gave more time to it than to the concerns of her family. After a conversation, on the subject which she monopolized, she finally stopped talking long enough for him to make his adieux. On leaving the house he found several dirty and neglected-looking children playing on the front steps. Quickly he rang the bell and was readmitted. Finding the lady still in the drawing-room, he made her a profound bow and administered this scathing rebuke:

"Madam, the Greeks are at your door."

His bitter and caustic spirit found expression in a coarse and violent manner of speech which to modern taste, is most offensive. A cousin of mine told me that he heard him say of Henry Clay, of whom Randolph was a violent political opponent,

"He stinks and shines and shines and stinks like a rotten mackerel by moonlight."

But ready-witted as he was, one man at least was a match for him.

He stopped one night at a country tavern and when taking his leave the next morning, the innkeeper said politely,

"Which way are you driving this morning, Mr. Randolph?" Randolph's slumbering ill-nature took offense, and turning he retorted in his squeaky voice—

"Have I paid your bill, Sir?"

"Yes, Mr. Randolph."

"Do I owe you anything?"

"Nothing, Mr. Randolph."

"Then I'm going whichever way I d—n please."

He drove away and within a very short distance came to a place where the road forked. Not knowing which one would carry him to his desti-

nation, he sent his servant back to inquire. The inn-keeper, who was still standing in the doorway, raised his voice and replied:

"You have paid your bill, Mr. Randolph. You owe me nothing whatever. You can take whichever road you d—n please."

CHAPTER XII

Ghosts

THE isolation of the plantations, the environment of an ignorant and superstitious race, tales and traditions transplanted from the old world—all fostered a belief in the supernatural. Sometimes I have fancied that there might have been actual foundation for some of these stories and that ghosts did continue to manifest themselves in the South long after they had ceased to be welcome in more frequented parts of the earth. As rats, when driven from one place repair to another, so the poor discredited apparitions.

Telepathy had not been invented in those days, while as for the sub-conscious mind, if anybody had one nobody ever said anything about it. Moreover, if you had more confidence in the veracity of the people who saw the ghosts than you had in your own how could you help believing?

My brother James was killed at the age of seventeen by the accidental discharge of his gun while hunting. He was very fond of his cousin, Virginia Bronaugh, and loved to hear her play.

At the very hour of the fatal shot, as she was practising, she looked up from her music and saw him, leaning in his accustomed attitude upon the piano. "Why, James McCarty," she exclaimed, "I didn't see you come in."

To her surprise he made no reply but turned and passed into the adjoining room where her mother and sisters sat with their sewing. She sprang up and followed him.

"You can't hide from me," she cried (they were always romping together and playing tricks on each other); "I saw you!"

"Why, Virginia," said her mother, "what are you talking about?"

"James McCarty came in here a minute ago. He is in this room somewhere now. I know you are hiding him from me."

"Virginia, you are crazy," they cried; "James McCarty hasn't been here." But she would not be convinced until she had looked behind the curtains and under the furniture. Later in the day a messenger brought the dreadful tidings. Then she knew that she had been privileged to see her beloved cousin at the moment of his passing.

At Contention, the home of Governor Pleasants, there was an apparently well-founded belief that when one of the family was about to die, a

wagon loaded with boards to make the coffin would be driven into the yard and its burden dumped at the door. Fancy, if you can, the scene! The sufferer, with burning cheeks and glazing eyes, tossing, picking at the sheets, the wind roaring in the chimney and rattling the windows, then the creaking and rumbling of the invisible wagon driving round the circle in the lawn and the awful thud of spectral planks thrown out at the door!

A relation of my husband had a little daughter named Rosy, a child so utterly lovely that few people saw her without declaring that she was too sweet to live. One day she came to her mother and said, "Mother, I have seen a spirit."

"Did you, dearest?" said her mother, alarmed but fearing to frighten the child by showing what she felt. "Yes, Mother, and he spoke to me. He said 'How d'y do, Rosy?' and I said 'How d'y do, Spirit?' Then he said, 'I'm coming for you to-night, Rosy.' Is he, Mother? Is he coming for me tonight?" "Hush, hush, my darling, of course he isn't. Mother will keep you safe with her."

That night, towards the small hours, the baby was seized with a frightful attack of croup and died before morning.

One of the choice spirits who aided and abetted my father's frolics was a young kinsman named Townsend Dade, who boasted one day that he was afraid of nothing alive or dead. Upon this, his companions dared him to go at midnight to the old haunted Church at Currotoman and write his name on the parish register. He accepted the challenge and with a bottle of ink in one hand and a lighted candle stuck in his cap, he strode off through the woods whistling merrily. His companions waited for him until long after cock-crow, but he did not return. The next day he was not to be found, nor the next, nor the next. A posse deputed to search for him went by daylight to the Church. There were found his footprints in the ancient dust of the aisle. On the yellowed page of the old register in fresh ink was a large capital T, followed by a long scrawl that trailed to the foot of the page. The ink-bottle had been overturned and the ink was dried on the floor.

That was all for many weeks. Then Townsend Dade returned from parts unknown with a white lock on his temple, but no persuasion could induce him to tell what he saw at midnight in the ruined chapel of Currotoman.

Haven't I said somewhere in this narrative that our plantation was in "Mosby's Confederacy"? Well, perhaps that may account for the following absolutely authentic incident:

One winter night several years after the war, two of our neighbors went coon-hunting. The moon shone bright, the air had a frosty stillness and the ground was frozen hard. The men bagged their game and were returning home about midnight when they distinctly heard a sound which had grown familiar during the years of conflict, the sound of clanking sabres and of thudding hoofs. So vivid was the impression, so certain were they that a squad of cavalry was coming down the road that involuntarily, by a common impulse, they both stepped aside to let it pass. It passed! The invisible host went by, the rush of whose riding stirred their hair! Terror-stricken they looked into each other's eyes and each murmured in a breath the one word "Yankees!" Then, as they told me in relating the experience, they took to their heels and ran home as fast as if the Yankees were really pursuing them.

The only noteworthy thing in the way of visions or warnings that ever came to my personal knowledge was a dream that visited my room-

mate when we were at boarding school. She awoke one morning disturbed and unhappy. She had dreamed that her guardian, with whom she lived, was dead and that she had seen him carried through the streets for burial in his arm-chair robed in the dressing gown that he habitually wore. The dream haunted her all the morning. She could not speak or smile. About noon she was summoned from the classroom. A messenger had come for her with the tidings that her guardian was dead. While sitting in his arm-chair in his library, he had committed suicide by cutting his throat.

These stories, except the last, have come to me from hearsay. In my own experience the supernatural has not played a prominent part. My feeling in the matter is that of an acquaintance who on being asked if he believed in ghosts replied,

"No, I don't believe in 'em, but I am afraid of 'em."

Of course the modern explanations of the inexplicable were unknown in my day.

The first spiritual rappings that I ever heard of occurred in Fairfax, the county adjoining Loudoun, several years before the Fox Sisters astonished the world with manifestations that laid

the foundation for a new cult. These rappings were heard at the house of a widow who lived alone with her young daughter. They attracted so much attention that people went for miles to investigate them. Local skepticism explained the matter by saying that the widow wanted to marry a man of whom the daughter did not approve and that the rappings were contrived to frighten her into going to live with her father's relations. Nothing was ever found, however, to substantiate this hypothesis, and when the Fox manifestations were spread abroad, many wondered if these earlier ones had received the consideration they deserved.

CHAPTER XIII

Practical Jokes and Some Old Time Remedies

I NEVER wearied of hearing my father tell of the pranks and frolics of his youth. His companion and arch-conspirator was a young man named Townsend Dade, a fellow of infinite jest and daring, whose adventure at old Currotoman Church we have already chronicled. Another member of the same set was John Keith, remarkable for a splendid figure, a serious demeanor and an extraordinarily dark complexion.

When the celebrated Indian chief, King Kickapoo, visited Washington, these three choice spirits chanced to be present at one of the President's levees. Keith wore a red necktie, and his raven hair, after the fashion of the hour, hung long over his coat collar. Towards the middle of the evening he came to my father in great excitement.

"McCarty," he said, "do you see anything extraordinary in my appearance tonight?"

"Nothing, except that you are looking remarkably well."

"But," he cried, "everywhere I go people are following me about and staring me out of countenance. What can be the reason of it? What can be the matter?"

Although my father could not tell, he had a shrewd suspicion that Townsend Dade could. Later it was discovered that Townsend had pointed Keith out to people as King Kickapoo enjoying Washington society incog.

Another of Dade's jokes at Keith's expense came near costing the humorist dear. He pointed out his swarthy friend to a negro trader as a refractory and troublesome slave whom he was anxious to sell. The trader agreed to the purchase. Dade, after warning him to clap the handcuffs on warily, as the man was dangerous, mounted his horse and rode for his life. Keith spent several months in looking for him, with the determination to kill him on sight.

The same rollicking spirits which prompted people to play practical jokes found expression in homeric feasting. Eating contests were frequent and tales of prodigious gastronomic feats were told.

Lawyers who had business in the Circuit Court would ride together to the different towns to try their cases. They would plan to arrive at certain

taverns for certain meals, the landlord being apprised beforehand of their coming. Dumfries was the place where they usually spent the night, breakfasting there next morning. A man who enjoyed a great local reputation as a gargantuan feaster, hearing that the lawyers were expected, rode in advance to Dumfries, ordered breakfast and continued to eat until he had consumed the entire meal that had been prepared for seven or eight guests.

When he went to pay his score, the landlord objected. "I cannot let you have such a meal as you have just eaten for the usual price; you have devoured the breakfast provided for nearly a dozen men."

"That makes no difference," replied the man; "the last time I was here I had only a cup of tea and a bit of toast, but you told me the price was the same whether I ate little or much."

On another occasion, when the lawyers were to dine in Leesburg, he slipped into the dining-room first, locked the door, and ate up everything on the table.

In Alexandria, when the schooners would come in laden with oysters, men would pay a quarter for permission to eat as many of them as they wanted. In an unlucky moment this permission

was granted to our prodigious eater. After devouring so many that the shells were heaped around him almost as high as his head, the owner of the cargo was obliged to pay him a dollar to leave off.

My father had a great number of these eating stories. Many of them I have forgotten, but this one I chance to remember:

He had been dining one evening with a party of gentlemen who spent the rest of the night playing cards. Towards morning one of them, feeling rather exhausted, rang the bell and ordered the waiter to bring him two soft boiled eggs.

"Ah," exclaimed another, looking up from his game, "that's a good idea. Bring me two dozen soft boiled eggs."

The waiter brought them, and the gentleman—(prepare to shudder, ye who chip your eggs daintily and sip them from the shell)—broke them into a celery glass and drank them down at a gulp.

My father, in his light-hearted young manhood, made a bet with a friend that he could sip *a magnauseous* (a compound of intolerable bitterness) and eat a slice of bread with it without making a wry face. He won his bet, but he lost

—a great deal, and he could never be induced to repeat this experiment.

The magnauseous, be it known to the disciples of Hahnemann, was concocted of Glauber salts and jalap; a tumblerful was the required dose. So indescribably horrible was it that my little brother, when they tried to force him to take it, bit a piece out of the glass.

Next to the maganuseous in efficacy was the "bolus," a huge pill which had to be disguised in guava jelly before it could be swallowed.

Bleeding, cupping and blistering were remedies of even greater barbarity. Cupping was of two kinds, the wet and the dry. Wet cups were little glasses whose rims were furnished with lancets.

Dry cupping was administered with any dry cups from which the air had been exhausted by burning in them a bit of paper wet in alcohol.

Blisters made with an ointment concocted of Spanish flies, in my opinion did a great deal more harm than good. Leeches were used wherever there was inflammation. These loathsome creatures were imported, and kept in little boxes of wet clay. Once when my father had gout in his head, leeches were applied to his temple. At first they were small and thin, but after sucking the

blood until they fell off with repletion, they had become as long and thick as your finger. They were thrown into salt water where they disgorged themselves to be ready for a second trial. In this they were never so efficient.

The earliest form in which quinine appeared was Peruvian Bark. Soaked in wine it made a tonic of inconceivable bitterness, though most efficacious in chills and fever. Pure quinine, when we first knew it, was a glittering white feathery stuff. Our old country doctor, who always brought his medicines in his saddle-bags, inclined to no capsules or sugar-coated pills. Instead, he would call for a chunk of cold corn bread, cut a thin slice of it, heap it high with the powder, then cut it into strips and roll it into huge pills. To swallow these pills was a deadly *tour de force,* but then you'd die if you didn't, so there you were! Before the introduction of quinine no remedy for malaria, the scourge of the South, was known except calomel. This was administered in such heroic quantities as to produce disastrous effects upon the system. A drop of water taken after calomel was supposed to entail certain death. The patient would be put to bed in a room from which every breath of air was excluded, covered with blankets and left to die or get well as nature should decide.

I have always admired the daring of a plucky young cousin of mine who, burning up with fever, begged for a glass of water. Of course it was refused. She feigned a desire for sleep and begged her kind nurses to leave her. She waited until she felt sure the house was absolutely quiet, then stole from her bed and crawled to the hall where stood a brass-bound bucket of ice water with a cocoanut dipper. With the certainty of death as a consequence of her action, she dragged herself up by a chair and drank from the dipper again and again. She plunged hands and arms into the icy fluid and laved her face and neck with it. Then she crept back to bed and fell into a deep sleep. When the doctor came in he pronounced the fever broken, but never until years had passed did she dare to confess how she had broken it.

In my father's boyhood anæsthesia was unknown and the barbarous surgery of the time entailed frightful tortures. The patient had to be tied down upon a table with strong cords while the operation was performed.

My Uncle James at fourteen fell from a cherry tree and broke his arm. It must be taken off! His mother knew him to be a boy of high spirit and great courage but she was hardly prepared

for his announcement that he would not consent to be tied during the amputation.

"I give you my word of honor," he said, "that I will keep perfectly still"; and he showed such intense feeling on the subject that they let him have his way. He was as good as his word and went through the terrible operation without moving a muscle. That he died in consequence makes the story of his useless fortitude all the more pitiful. We can so much more easily spare the poltroon than the hero.

The simple magic of herbs and spells had considerable vogue among the negroes, and certain charms and incantations, such as wishing away styes or selling them at the cross-roads, were acknowledged even by the better class. I myself can give personal testimony to the curative agency of one miraculous worker, the madstone. When my Uncle William was a little boy a dog bit him. Certain of rabies in the animal, his parents took him a day's journey as fast as their horses could travel to the stone. It was of coarse, porous quality, small in size and oval in shape. It fastened itself to the wound and remained sticking tight for about an hour, when it fell off of its own accord, leaving a vivid green stain.

Whether the madstone has lost its wonderful properties with years or is still competing with the Pasteur Institute I cannot say.

CHAPTER XIV

War Times

IT has often been remarked as noteworthy that the huge plantations of the South should have been so easily governed when the slaves so greatly outnumbered their masters. The only uprising in Virginia that ever I heard of was called "The Southampton Insurrection." It was led by a negro named Nat Turner, familiarly known as "Captain Nat." The insurrection extended to several counties before the leader was captured and executed. The planters felt great alarm and organizing themselves into companies, went out night after night patrolling the country in defense of their homes. My mother, who that winter visited with her two little boys and their nurse at the home of one of her sisters, has often described to me the long evenings that the two women spent together, starting and trembling when a leaf fell or a twig crackled on the gravel walk. This happened in 1831, but there had been more fearsome happenings years before in 1812, when my grandmother Lee and her household watched from the upper windows of Coton the flames of the burning Capitol fired by the British.

Coton being only twenty miles from Washington, was in the heart of the enemy's country. The invaders ravaged the country, leaving desolation behind them. My grandmother was living alone with her young daughters, there being no white man on the place, and it is not surprising that, brave and self-reliant woman as she was, she lived in a state of nervous terror. One morning a servant rushed in to tell her that the news had just come of the British marching up the turnpike. Summoning all her courage and presence of mind, she called her household together, ordered every door and window to be fastened, and prepared to make such defense as was possible. Time went by but the British did not appear. At last a long way off was heard the tramp of feet, the clank of sabres, and all the terrifying sounds that herald the approach of troops. When the suspense had become unbearable, my grandmother ventured to lift the corner of a curtain and peep out. Judge of her delight when she saw the yard and the road beyond swarming with soldiers, not in the scarlet of the British but the blue of the American army! She rushed to the door to welcome them. They had been defeated at Bladensburg and were in full retreat; but they had time to stop for the hot corncakes and

the steaming mugs of coffee which the colored cooks dispensed. The officers—lucky fellows!—breakfasted on fried chicken and batter bread and honey, served on the old Canton china.

But the war of 1812 was opera bouffe compared to that other conflict which drenched the fair soil of Virginia with blood. The family estate lay in the heart of "Mosby's Confederacy." Back and forth, up and down, that border chieftain harried the enemy. No one on the plantation ever knew when a visit from the boys in grey or the boys in blue might be expected, and both were greatly dreaded; for if by any chance one party left anything, the other arrived quickly to appropriate it. Then it was that the tenant-folk learned how to drive the horses and cattle quickly to hiding places in the depth of the swamp; then it was that the goodwife had a hole cut in the log wall of her house between kitchen and living-room, through which aperture, concealed by an innocent calico curtain, she convoyed many a ham or fowl or pat of fresh butter to a place where the marauders were unlikely to find it.

When a certain gallant officer took command of the Union armies just before the Second Battle of Manassas, he issued orders couched in the following grandiloquent phraseology. "Headquar-

ters in the saddle. Defeat and dishonor lurk in the rear."

He was, as we all know, absolutely defeated and was obliged to make a sudden departure, leaving his camp outfit and dress uniform to fall into the hands of the enemy. The news of the battle was received in Richmond the next morning, and in *The Examiner,* a paper edited by John Daniel, appeared a cocky editorial which after lusty crowing ended with the following comment, a trifle coarse but undeniably witty:

"In the light of recent events it seems rather absurd that an officer who could not tell his *head quarters* from his *hind quarters* should think that he could fight General Lee."

I have often heard my husband relate an anecdote of Mosby which occurred in Leesburg the summer after the war. The Northern soldiers, quartered everywhere, were naturally interested in a Confederate uniform and may be pardoned an unusual interest if it chanced to be worn by Colonel Mosby. That gallant chieftain continued to wear the grey long after hostilities ceased for the excellent reason that he had nothing else to wear. Coming into Leesburg one day on peaceable business, he was very much annoyed to find himself followed everywhere by a posse of

Northern soldiers. He entered a barber-shop finally in which my husband was having his hair cut. Mosby took his place in the chair and the barber proceeded to shave him, when suddenly the door opened to receive two blue uniforms. The guerrilla chieftain sprang up, his face covered with lather, his eyes blazing. Shaking his fist, he shouted, "If you don't get out of here and stop following me about, I'll *massacree* every d'd Yankee in town." Whereupon the two soldiers who had come to arrest him, turned meekly and took their departure.

CHAPTER XV

Slavery as I Knew It

LIFE as I have been trying to describe it seemed to the onlooker a condition of ideal happiness: a smiling land, trees loaded with fruit, rivers stocked with fish and woods with game, devoted service from willing slaves, lovely girls, gallant young men, fine old Southern gentlemen, piety, courtesy, honor. And yet under it all sounded the hollow rumble that must have been heard from time to time in Herculaneum and Pompeii. It was always there, that nameless anxiety.

I have had occasion many times in these pages to mention my little black Mammy. I cannot imagine what my childhood would have been without her; I loved her dearly—almost as much as Mammy loved her husband, Daddy Peter, who came every week to spend Sunday with her and always brought me a present. Sometimes it was a pocketful of nuts, sometimes a red apple or a colored egg, and once it was a little mug with the name "Jane" in blue letters. True, my name wasn't Jane, but what did that matter? I couldn't read and neither could he and there was besides

a little mystery about the name of Jane that made me value my treasure all the more.

How well I remember as a little child that summer at Bedford Springs in Pennsylvania! Mammy had gone to do some washing at a cabin in the mountains with whose inmates she had made acquaintance, and she did not come back. My mother walked the floor, unable to control her agitation; my father said over and over again, "We have seen the last of her," while I hid my face in my pillow and cried. How we rejoiced the next morning when she entered the room as usual! She explained that being tired with her work and the long walk she had lain down to rest and had slept till daybreak.

After I married, my children came in for a share of the devotion she had always lavished on me. When they went to see her as they never failed to do, their coming was the occasion of great rejoicing. Throwing up her arms she would call to her neighbors, "Oh, come see my chillun!" and while the black folk crowded round to wonder and admire she would bestir herself to find presents for her visitors. When our house on the plantation burned down and we were in temporary stress for the comforts and luxuries to which we had been accustomed, she arrived

promptly in a borrowed cart with a ham, a pound cake, a pair of fowls, and a jar of preserves. It was not uncommon in those days when one glanced down the road to see Uncle Charles, her husband, plodding towards us with a pillow-case upon his shoulders full of her famous ginger cookies.

When the Civil War broke out my husband and I returned to the South and took a house in Richmond. Mammy, however, objected to living in Richmond because negroes there were obliged to show passes when they went out after dark. She went back to Leesburg, married for the third time, but refused in her loyalty to Daddy Peter, to take her new husband's name, and lived in a little cabin, supporting herself by doing washing and by taking boarders. One of her boarders was an insignificant little woman named Victoria, whom she called "Sister Fick," and another, a person so remarkable as to deserve almost to be called a personage, "Sister Peggy!"

Sister Peggy was a hundred years old and was said to have come from Africa. She had been immensely tall in her youth, with long straight hair that reached to her knees. When I knew her she was bent almost double with age and her pale yellow hands were as chill as if she had had ice

instead of blood in her veins. She was the objective point of religious feeling in the community and there were few Sunday afternoons when some member of the Episcopal Church to which she belonged did not come to read the Bible to her.

Mammy, with all her intelligence and the advantage of living her life long on intimate terms with educated people, still had a streak in her of African savagery. She was a devout believer in "Conjure." She kept a horseshoe nailed above her door and habitually slept with an open penknife under her pillow. When sick she thought herself bewitched, attributing her malady to the evil influence of an enemy. Once I found her scraping a silver dollar and asked her what she was doing. She replied that she had a terrible aching in her bones; she had "sholy" been conjured, and had been advised to take silver to break the spell. After I gave her quinine the aching disappeared. She told me she had often heard the wings of the witches waving above her head at night.

Mammy was a devoted member of the Episcopal Church, always going up alone, a quaint figure in a bonnet and silk-velvet mantle which had been my mother's, to take the Communion after the white folks had been served. As her

husband, Uncle Charles, a small black man who looked very much like a monkey, grew older, he yielded to her importunity and consented to join the Church she loved, but feeling timid about presenting himself for Confirmation alone, induced the Baptist minister, a man of his own color, to go up with him. The bishop having pronounced the impressive words directed the postulants to kneel, whereupon the Baptist minister in his confusion knelt with Uncle Charles and was confirmed also. The incident created some amusement in the congregation but I never heard that it did the reverend gentleman any harm.

The privilege allowed to colored cooks of taking boarders at their own expense in the kitchens of their masters was one of the many peculiar customs incidental to slavery. It is needless to say that this custom became fruitful of abuses. After the death of Mammy Lucy, a valuable servant in my husband's family, my sister-in-law found a barrel of batter cakes behind the good woman's bed, and seventeen padlocks which had disappeared one after another from the coal-house door.

This petty thievery on the part of the servants went on continually. The masters knew it but winked at it, well understanding how the slaves,

considering themselves chattels, thought they had a right to anything belonging to their masters.

If one's possessions were not taken outright they were borrowed for special occasions. I learned, too late to prevent it, that my husband's watch chain had been worn to a negro picnic, and discovered, fortunately in time, that the bed prepared for a sick boarder was made up with one of my best tablecloths.

The colored folk in my sister-in-law's household were considered members of the family. The older people were addressed as "Uncle" and "Aunt," and their sons and daughters by a logical process were called "Cousin" by their master's children.

Here is a letter addressed to his former mistress by one of her slaves, Mammy Lily's grandson. It is dated March 13, 1882, and breathes the devotion of the old-time negro together with the pathos which characterized the later generation when confronted with conditions they were unfitted to meet.

Mrs. Brent,

Dear Madam,

I received Your very welcome letter and I assure you Madam I was more than glad to hear from you. But I was extremely sorry to

hear that you had been so very sick—but I hope by this time you have entirely Recovered and are enjoying the Blessing of the Lord. I thank you very kindly for sending my Age. It is something very rare with us poor Col. People to know our Age. I am Proud to know mine. Dear Miss Cannie I offen sit and think of the Old Family Place and think of the happy hours I have spent there. I offen think of the Footsteps I have followed across the Fields of evenings to Hollywood Seminary when you would sit upon the Hill whilst I would go to fetch the Water to Put on the sod of the Grave of one whom you Dearly loved. It is a great consolation to me that we will all see each other some day in a Better World. I Will now close hoping to hear from you again soon.

I remain your humble servant,

My cousin William Brent was an intimate friend of Charles Suttle, the owner of Tony Burns, the runaway negro, whose case is familiar to every student of American history.

Mr. Suttle asked my cousin to go with him to Boston to prove the identity of Burns, who had been apprehended there under the Fugitive Slave Law and incarcerated pending the arrival of his

master. As soon as they entered the prison where he was confined, Tony exclaimed:

"Howdy, Marse Charles! Howdy, Marse William!", thus settling for good the question of identity. But the troubles of the young Virginians were by no means over. Returning to their rooms they found the streets so packed with an excited throng that they had difficulty in reaching their hotel. All afternoon it was surrounded and threats of lynching were not infrequently heard. The Southern students at Harvard, as soon as they learned of the danger of their compatriots, marched thither in a body, offered to stand by them and did stay with them at the hotel until their departure. When they finally left Boston, carrying Tony Burns with them, it was under military escort.

To offset this story, which was undoubtedly one of the exciting causes of the Civil War, let me relate an incident which happened about the same time and came also under my immediate knowledge.

Some seven or eight years before the war, Mammy went with us to a water cure in Northampton, Massachusetts. As negroes were not allowed to travel in the same cars with white people, we were obliged to make her wear gloves

and a thick veil on the journey and to promise not to speak a word on any provocation. Once arrived in Massachusetts, she was at liberty to follow her own devices, but by this time her devotion had been tried and we had no fear of her leaving us.

While we were in Northampton my father, being summoned to Milwaukee on business, was taken very ill there. My mother and I went to him immediately, leaving Mammy in charge of our cottage at the water cure. As my father's illness terminated fatally, we decided to return at once to Virginia instead of going back to New England. We had scarcely reached home when my mother became so desperately ill that several weeks elapsed before I could make arrangements for Mammy's journey, although she had written two or three letters urging me to send her the money to come home.

The evening of her arrival she told me some of her experiences.

"Miss Sally," she said, "I was gwine to wo'k my way home if you hadn't sent me the money, but I had a heap of offers to stay. You know Mr. Wendell Phillips, don't you honey? Well, after you and Mistis went away he sent for me and advised me not to go back to Virginia. I told

him that Marster was dead and that I loved you an' Mistis an' wanted to go back an' live with you. He didn't say much to that but he went on talkin' about my bein' free in Massachusetts and tellin' me the good places he could git me in the North if I would stay. I was workin' then for Mrs. Hammond, the lady you boa'ded with, honey, and he asked me after a while if I didn't like her. 'Yes,' I sez, 'I like her pretty well, but Mr. Phillips,' I sez, 'there's one thing about Mrs. Hammond that I don't like very well and if my Marster and Mistis had knowed it they never would a' stayed in her house in dis world.' "

" 'Why, Matilda,' he sez, 'you astonish me! What is it?' "

"Sez I, 'Mr. Phillips, does you know that Mrs. Hammond is an *abolitionist?*' "

"Well, honey, he t'rowed back his head and laughed fit to kill hisself."

From the time that I was old enough to think for myself I had grave misgivings that slavery was wrong. Mammy was the only slave my parents owned and after my mother's death, as soon as I came of age, I set her free and paid her wages as my maid. After my marriage she went to New York with me and was the nurse of my elder children.

CHAPTER XVI

Piety

"My Dear Cannie,

I WAS much gratified yesterday to get your letter and to learn that you sometimes think of your oldest friends now resident on this terrestrial globe. When we used to hear your dear grandma and Aunt Moncure talking about 'old times,' we were made to believe it was a pity we did not live in those glorious days too. Now, my dear old girl, we have found out that the charm lay in their being young. You let your own years leak out when you refer to the 'jolly times we used to have at Woodford and Windsor Forest.' Do you remember how we lodged together in the trundle bed and I would have to crawl out in the cold to punch Letty and make her wake up to turn the loaf bread? I shall never forget the breakfasts with the chapter from the Bible and the verses of Watt's hymns, the golden pat of delicious butter adorned with nasturtiums, the biscuits beat by the hour by Mammy Lily, the thick cream, the best egg bread ever made!

"Then I would go with you on the morning rounds to feed the fowls. What lots of Muscovy

ducks, puddle-ducks, turkeys and geese there were! What would induce you to nail a gosling to the laundry floor and cram him with dough until he choked as Mammy Lily used to do?" (Paté de foie gras was evidently not unknown to ante-bellum epicures.) "Then the swing! Cannie, I have often thought it a merciful providence that we were not killed in that swing. Perpendicular we sailed, heedless of danger. Then, how we rested on the sofa on the back porch where the little peewee built her nest. Did I ever steal a kiss in those days? If I did, I never told. All I have got to say in my old age, is that he is a sorry boy who wouldn't kiss a pretty girl if he got a chance and a mean dog if he told. We used to have heaps of fun then. Good Lord, it was fifty odd years ago. Old times, 'my child, my honey,' as Mammy Lily used to say when she would almost squeeze my 'innerds' out of me.

"Cannie, weren't those steps back of your Uncle John's room the coldest you ever sat upon? I have known your pious Aunt Caroline to send you there to get your catechism. Doesn't it seem funny to you now that you were so crazy about going to camp-meeting? You always kept me well advised whenever there was to be one. Why didn't you 'jine' the Methodists? You used to go

to hear Enoch Jamison preach the propitiation of sins and the great doctrines of Wesley and then you renegaded and made a coalition with the 'Piscopalians. You are a 'readjuster.' "

There are few of these old letters that do not contain a reference to religion. Many of them express a fervor of devotion that we seem to have lost the secret of nowadays. Were they really at heart so much more pious than we, or did the sermon take the place of the newspaper, the review, even the romance? The parents rejoice when their sons and daughters join the Church as do we when ours start on a trip to Europe; and just before signing themselves, "Your Ob't Serv't," they invariably consign their correspondent to the care and protection of heaven.

Here is a letter from a kinsman that would be hard to match nowadays. Having embarked on that perilous undertaking, a boys' school, he writes,

"The zealous prayers and faithful labors of the excellent Christian gentleman conducting the teachers' department, I am persuaded will not be as 'water spilt on the ground which cannot be gathered up.' " He continues, "I think Cabell is growing serious on the subject of religion. Johnson, you know, has joined the Church and

Leigh may be moved by a combined movement of us all. . . . .

"In the meantime may God bless and preserve you, prays your friend in the bonds of our common Christianity." . . . .

My Grandmother Lee writes: "I had a delightful time in my recent visit to Middleburgh, heard seven sermons."

Poor lady, it is well that she had the consolations of religion in her age for in her youth her strong, sincere spirit was sorely tried. The Episcopal clergymen sent over from England to the Westmoreland parish to which Sabine Hall belonged, were younger sons of wealthy families provided for with livings irrespective of their fitness for the sacred calling. Parson Gibbon, the incumbent during my grandmother's childhood, was addicted to fox-hunting, cards and the bottle. Often he would get home after an all-night's carouse barely in time to slip into his surplice before taking his place in the chancel. Parson Weems in his life of Washington describes the same condition of the Church in colonial Virginia, and relates the incident, often quoted, of the curate who drawing a handkerchief out of his pocket during the services scattered a pack of cards over the floor.

Although a mere child at the time, my grandmother was thoughtful enough to feel a decided disapproval of these "goings on," and refused to join a Church which permitted such laxity in the clergy. Not until Bishop Meade, strong, stern and resolute, had corrected the abuses and driven the money-changers out of the temple, would she connect herself with the Church in which she had been baptised. Of Bishop Meade's splendid work of reform the church in Virginia today—fervent in piety, untainted with worldliness or ritual—is a fitting monument. But does not George Eliot say, "Even Milton looking for his likeness in a spoon cannot escape the facial angle of a bumpkin"? Bishop Meade in old age grew irascible, and his failings came to make more impression on the laity than his high character and fine achievement. One day during the Council a young lady in Richmond being asked: "Isn't Bishop Meade putting up with you?" replied, "No, we are putting up with him."

Family prayers at which attendance by children and slaves was obligatory were the universal custom, and who can wonder if the little folk sometimes found them irksome?

My little cousin Otway Mason used to ride to school a considerable distance on horseback behind a man-servant. One morning his attendant

observed that he sighed deeply several times as if oppressed with some heavy trouble.

"Marse Otway," he enquired, "what mak' you keep on sighing dat way lak you was gwine to be converted?"

"Oh, Aaron," replied the boy, "I am so tired of hearing about Moses and that other disciple running to the Sepulchre!"

Negroes and poor white folks alike found intense satisfaction in revivals. After being "convicted of sin" they spent a long interval in "seeking," a period in which they scarcely spoke or smiled. Then suddenly they emerged from this Slough of Despond into a state of radiant happiness. One night after attendance upon camp-meeting our overseer's daughter bounded into the room with the joyful shout—

"I'm saved and sanctified up to date!"

One Sunday morning my Aunt Fanny, as she was going down to breakfast, was arrested by the spectacle of Sally, my nurse, executing a fantastic *pas seul,* before the long mirror. "Well, Sally," she exclaimed, "I *am* astonished, after all your professions of religion, to see you dancing before the looking glass on Sunday morning."

"Why, la, Miss Fanny," said the girl reproachfully, "I wasn't a dancin', I was a praisin' de Lord."

CHAPTER XVII

Talent, Known and Unknown

WHEN I hear people talk of Mary Garden and Schumann-Heink, I sometimes wonder how they compare with the stars of an earlier day. I heard Patti when she was only eight years old. She was a small, slender child with extraordinarily black eyes and hair. Ole Bull, who traveled in the same troupe, said of her that when he heard her sing, he thought she was an angel, but that when he saw her in one of her violent paroxysms of temper, he knew that she was a devil.

Again when she was eighteen I heard her. Her voice had grown with her stature and her whole body seemed to vibrate with the volume of sound that issued from her small throat. She was dressed in yellow silk, and with her sleek little black head and very petite figure, reminded one of a canary bird.

Jenny Lind sang in Philadelphia in the winter of '50-'51, and I went with a party of friends to one of her concerts. I remember especially the famous little run with which she always made her entrée upon the stage, and the bird-song which

her audience always demanded—a translation of *Voglein.* It begins—

"Birdling, why sing in the forest wild?
Say why, say why—"

I wonder if anyone ever sings it now.

Everybody knows that when Jenny Lind landed at Castle Garden, young men took her horses out of the carriage and drew her up Broadway themselves; but does everybody know that the people in "the provinces" who had the taste and the means to go a long distance to hear her, became ever afterwards a sort of aristocracy humorously designated "The Jenny Linders"?

An anecdote is told of her that I venture to repeat because I believe it to be unfamiliar. A lady who was obliged to spend some time in a little town in Switzerland interested herself in the local church. She found the architecture good but the music execrable. Her efforts to improve the choir becoming known, a middle-aged woman called upon her to offer her services in leading the singing. When asked for her credentials she modestly proffered a card on which was engraved the name, Jenny Lind Goldschmidt.

The same winter that I heard her sing in Philadelphia, I made the acquaintance (though he never knew it) of Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian

patriot who had come to America to enlist sympathy and collect funds for his cause. With his suite he boarded the train on which I was journeying to Washington, he also going thither to deliver before Congress that famous speech remarkable among other things for its perfect English. He had learned our language during his imprisonment in Austria, having no books except a Bible and a dictionary.

Some years later I heard Thackeray lecture on Steele, Addison, and Congreve. He was very tall, with bright blue eyes and a brilliant complexion. As for his personal magnetism, one could hardly exaggerate it.

I was too young to hear Dickens read on his first visit to America, but even as a child I shared the general indignation excited by his *American Notes*. In them he gives an injurious account of a journey through the mountains of Virginia, in "Stage Number One," with its negro driver. This incident inspired my Uncle Landon to write the following stanzas:

1

"I hear, Massa Boz, of dat po' piece of fun
You write for de British 'bout Stage Number One,
An' I think I must try and be writin' note too
'Case I was de driber dat day dat dribe you.

2

"I heard you was comin', great hubbub it cause
'Bout de great Massa Pickwick, de great Massa Boz,
But when fust in my presence you come, Sir, to stand;
I see in a minute you're a mighty small man.

3

"I'm told that you say dat we keep de bad road
And fling on de passenger water and mud,
But de dirt dat you fling on us all in your note
Is more dan we 'sposed such a fellow could tote.

4

"At the staff of my whip you must have a fling,
You say it was tied with a piece of twine string;
Dat's true, an' I'll give you one word to the wise—
It was broke on the back of a vender of lies."

One of the curious memories of my childhood outlasting more important things, is of the exhibition of Miss Hunniwell, a singular little creature who performed wonderful feats with her toes. She was a dwarf or a hunchback, and was born without arms. With her toes, which were beautifully *manicured* and covered with rings, she could sew, write and cut out from tissue-paper marvellous figures of trees, birds, flowers, etc. These were afterwards distributed among the spectators as souvenirs.

The winter that I became engaged, I went to see the Aztec Children, said to have been found

in niches in the ruins of an Aztec temple. They were dwarfs and might have been brother and sister. They had black, curling hair and black eyes, their features having an Egyptian cast. They were exhibited upon a raised platform and seemed to be able to communicate with one another in a strange language that no one in the audience could understand.

About the same time the pictures from the Dusseldorf gallery were brought to this country. Being the first really great pictures to be exhibited in America, they created a tremendous sensation. It was quite the thing in fashionable circles to discuss and appraise them. I never knew the lady who remarked that she "couldn't think how Mr. Dusseldorf found time to do them all so nicely," but an acquaintance of mine, a woman rather fond of displaying her familiarity with the fine arts, did really roll up her eyes and say to me, "Dusseldorf's a fine artist, Sallie." And I could but agree.

The same season that I saw Kossuth, Lola Montez was touring the large cities with her play, *Lola Montez of Bavaria*. Her beauty was more remarkable than her dancing, which formed a conspicuous part of the performance; nevertheless she created a furore wherever she appeared,

although her previous career as mistress of the artist-King, Louis I of Bavaria, caused her to be looked at askance by the *unco guid,* who were a deal more scrupulous than they are now.

In these early days the difficulties in the way of fitting oneself for a musical career were almost insuperable. The logic of the case was simple: if you had no money you couldn't go abroad to study, and if you couldn't go abroad, you couldn't become a great musician. My father had a neighbor and friend named Hedgman, who was a fair violinist. Mr. Hedgman, the father of a large family of children who were growing up with no "advantages," was "land poor." Peter, the eldest son, began, at an early age, to play upon his father's fiddle, devoting himself to it to the exclusion of every duty. At last his father lost patience and forbade him under penalty of a good whipping ever to touch the instrument again. Some weeks afterwards when riding through the woods Mr. Hedgman heard a familiar tune played in a very singular way. Following the sound he presently discovered Peter. The youth was sitting on a stump, performing upon a fiddle of his own construction, made of a large gourd strung with some bits of catgut. A more human and humorous person would have been touched by this,

but not so Peter's father. He flew into a passion, trounced his son roundly and told him to take his fiddle and go to the Devil with it.

When Peter had grown to manhood, hearing that a celebrated European violinist was to play in Philadelphia, he made up his mind to hear him if he were obliged to go thither on foot. The difficulties were great, but Peter overcame them. My father descried him in the fashionable audience, a marked figure with shock head and rustic air. At the close of the performance, he sought the young man to ask if he would like to meet the great musician. Of course, Peter was enraptured. My father introduced him to the virtuoso and described the long and arduous journey the boy had taken to hear the performance. The violinist listened courteously, then turned to Peter. In a few moments the two were deeply engaged in conversation. Suddenly the musician exclaimed, "I will play that for you again," and seizing his violin executed a composition already given that evening. Peter's face was pale with rapture too deep for words.

"Now, you shall play for me," he said, and handed over the instrument with a smile. Peter, trembling with fright, begged to be excused, but the master was insistent. My father added his

entreaties, and at last the country boy timidly drew the bow across the strings. The familiar touch gave him confidence, the quality of the instrument and its response under his touch astonished him, and as he played he forgot the presence in which he stood, forgot his ignorance, his limitations, remembered only to pour forth his soul in the music. The mood passed, the bow dropped from his fingers and he sank exhausted in his chair. Then the master came to him with tears streaming down his cheeks and clasping his hands, exclaimed—

"You tell me you are entirely untaught in music. I have devoted my life to it under the best teachers, but if I should try for a hundred years I could never play as you have done."

CHAPTER XVIII

Manners upon the Road

THE little talk that we had about stage-coaches a chapter or so ago reminds me of an experience of my father's which illustrates the lawlessness of the time and the perils of the road. The coach in which he was traveling stopped at a little mountain inn. Here were two ladies, a mother and daughter, the former of whom had been hurt in a road accident several days before. The daughter made an appeal to the passengers for aid, saying that her mother was growing worse and she did not know what to do for her.

"Why not put her in our coach and carry her to the next town where she could see a physician?" suggested some one.

"That is what I should like to do," replied the girl, "but the driver refuses to take her."

"Refuses to take her! Why?"

"He says he won't be bothered with her."

"Just get her ready to start when we do," said my father, "and I'll see whether he'll take her or not."

When the time for departure arrived, two of the gentlemen carried the invalid in their arms to

the coach. The driver, who had been drinking, looked round from the box.

"Take her back to the house," he said, "she ain't a goin' in this stage coach."

"Why not?"

"Because I won't be bothered with a d—d sick woman," he replied.

"This lady is going with us," said my father, and the passengers echoed him.

The driver threw down the reins.

"Then you can drive yourselves," he said, "for I ain't a goin' a step."

Whereupon my father drew a pistol from his pocket (nobody traveled without a weapon in those days) and approached the brute.

"Pick up the reins this instant and drive this coach, or I'll blow your brains out," he said.

"I'll drive it to Hell!"

"You'll drive just as I tell you to," rejoined the champion as he swung himself up to the driving box, and for fifteen miles he never removed his pistol from the man's ear.

Some thirty years later, when I was a young girl, road conditions had greatly improved, although there were still grave abuses. Excepting the saddle-horse, the stage-coach was the only means of traveling through the mountains of

Virginia. It would accommodate nine inside passengers and several on the outside. In the height of the season it was usually crowded.

I had occasion to journey from the Salt Sulphur Springs in Southwestern Virginia to the Warm Springs, when it chanced that a man who had been drinking heavily for several days was one of the passengers. At every little post-house that he passed he would get out and drink more whiskey until his face was like fire, and he could not hold himself upright. He sat opposite to me and next to "Mammy," whom I was taking along as my maid. Every now and then he would lurch against her, falling almost on her shoulder and she would whimper to me:

"Miss Sally, this gentleman is lying almost in my lap."

"Push him off!" I would reply fiercely. "Give him a good knock and make him behave himself."

I could not induce my cousin, who was our escort, to take any measures of redress, but several other gentlemen, seeing how greatly we were annoyed, proposed to the driver to have the man ride outside. This, however, in his intoxicated condition was out of the question.

We stopped for supper and bed at a little inn, famous for its beat biscuit and fried chicken, and

here I fondly hoped that my fellow passenger would sleep off his "jag," but the next morning he took his place inside drunker than ever. The weather was intolerably hot, even early in the morning, and the prospect of a whole day with this man in such disgusting condition sitting opposite filled me with dismay. I ventured to protest that he was in no condition to ride in a conveyance with ladies, but the driver contended that since he had paid his fare, there was no reasonable excuse for leaving him behind.

As the day advanced he grew, if possible, worse hour by hour. Towards noon I saw an empty stage-coach approaching on its way back to the Salt Sulphur Springs, having discharged its load of passengers; I also saw my opportunity. At a small stream that crossed the road both drivers stopped to water their horses, and there was an exchange of civilities. Ostensibly for the purpose of taking a little stroll, I walked a short distance away and seated myself upon a fallen log. When the horses had drunk their fill and all was ready for starting my cousin called to me to come and take my place. I paid no attention, so he came to me to say that they were about to start and I must come at once. Raising my voice so as to be heard by every one, I replied that I would

not return to the coach until that drunken man was taken out of it. By this time several other remonstrants had joined the group. What was to be done? they asked; the man had paid his fare, he could not be left on the road.

"No," I replied, "but he can be put in that empty stage and sent back to the last post-house where he came from." This suggestion met with approval and was acted upon at once. The drunken man was transferred to the empty stage and a negro boy put in with him to keep him from banging himself to pieces.

In course of time the story got told with more or less exaggeration, one of the additions being that as he drove off he put his head out of the window and called back—

"I reckon that lady must belong to the F. F. V.'s, doesn't she?"

The sail or row-boat was the only alternative of the stage-coach in my father's day. On one occasion, with his guardian, George Mason, he made the trip by water from Acquia Creek to Washington. The weather was severe and the men were out all night. Unable to sleep in consequence of being chilled to the bone, George Mason rummaged among the cargo and discovered a bag of wool. Into it he thrust his benumbed

feet and not long afterwards a grateful warmth suffusing his veins he fell into a delightful slumber. My father, perishing with cold and utterly miserable, bore the spectacle of this felicity as long as he was able, then he gently slipped the bag of wool off of Mason's feet, drew it over his own and lost no time in gliding into the Land of Nod. Hours after Mason awoke with an uncomfortable sensation of cold and swore lustily at the sleeper who had tricked him.

When railroads were first established the trains were imperfectly equipped and met with frequent misadventures. A friend of mine who had made the initial trip from Fredericksburg to Richmond told me that the fuel gave out and the passengers had to get out and pick up sticks sufficient to keep the engine going.

In this connection I take the liberty to quote an anecdote which was published a short time ago in *Everybody's,* because it concerns Mr. Peter Daniels, a thirty-second cousin and old acquaintance once of my own.

At a meeting of the stockholders of the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad, a proposition was brought up to reduce the fare from seventeen to eleven cents a mile. At this

Mr. Peter Daniels, one of the directors, sprang to his feet.

"Reduce the fare to eleven cents a mile!" he exclaimed. "Why, my God, gentlemen, if you do that you'll have all the rag-tag and bobtail in Virginia riding on the cars."

CHAPTER XIX

The Tournament

THE first momentous social event of my childhood was the wedding of Nellie Selden to my distant relation, Augustine Washington of Mount Vernon, a great nephew of that distinguished statesman who is still spoken of in certain Virginia families as "Cousin George." Nellie Selden's father married *en second noces,* Eliza Lee of Belmont; thus we were connections as well as intimate friends. The Seldens lived at the fine estate of Exeter, about a mile from Leesburg. Nellie, an only child, was her father's heiress. The announcement of her engagement to Augustine Washington was received with general approval, as was also the news of the immense preparations to be made for the wedding. Wines, game, fruit and confectionery were ordered from Philadelphia. The supper was served on long tables decorated with pyramids of iced cakes and with baskets of nougat filled with colored flowers made of sugar. Bonbons in quaint and curious shapes set us youngsters nearly crazy. Mr. Selden filched one for me which was in the form of a fish and I kept

it long among my chief treasures. One of the loveliest dishes was made of blanc-mange moulded in eggshells and set in nests of jelly rendered more realistic by strips of orange peel cut thin to represent straw. Hams, saddles of mutton, fowls and oysters were served from a separate table and washed down with imported wines. Bridesmaids and groomsmen came from Washington and Philadelphia. One little maid of nine from Leesburg, in a new frock, received enough notice to turn her head.

The next thrilling event of my childhood was the tournament. This entertainment was designed to perpetuate the jousts of chivalry. They held it in a wide, level field around three sides of which were ranged, row above row as in a circus, seats for the spectators. A large tent for the use of the knights stood at one end of the field, also a shed roofed with boughs, where the sleek horses awaited their riders. At the opposite end was the judge's stand flanked by an elevated seat for a grinning row of negro musicians. Three pairs of stout posts were erected along the course about fifty feet apart, and between each pair was suspended a ring several inches in diameter wrapped with gay ribbons. The test of skill, sole object of the tournament, was while riding at full speed,

to take the rings one after the other upon the point of the lance three times in succession, and the reward of the successful knight was the permission to crown his lady Queen of Love and Beauty at the Tournament Ball in the evening.

All being in readiness, the trumpeter blew a ringing blast and the knights rode into the lists. All wore masques and fancy dress to symbolize something in history or fiction. I remember that the Knight of Ivanhoe came first in what was intended to represent a coat of mail; next, on a black horse came the Knight of the Lone Star, a silver star on his sable breast; the Knight of Waverly in white and blue; the Knight of the Old Dominion in green and gold; the Knight of Mephistopheles in black and scarlet, with horns, and a tail that provoked wild merriment; the Knight of the Potomac on a red-roan steed. Many more there were which have gone from my memory. As each contestant entered the lists, the herald proclaimed him in ringing tones. Strange to say, I have forgotten the designation of the young gentleman who had promised to ride for me. He was really very much in love with one of the grown young ladies, but was considerate enough to ask my mother if she thought I would be hurt should he give the crown to her in the event of his winning it.

To take the rings on the lance, while riding at a gallop, was indeed a difficult feat and one that required horsemanship of the highest order. On this day, when the first knight carried off two, the musicians sounded strenuous applause. The rings being replaced, the next contestant cantered forward, lance in position, but alas! he missed all three and the horns and fiddles had to do their utmost to cover his failure. So it went on until one gallant rider carried off all three at once. When he had performed the same feat twice more, he was proclaimed the victor of the day.

At the close of the tournament the knights drew up a semi-circle in front of the judge's stand and were addressed by the orator of the day in fervid rhetoric. After praising them warmly for their prowess and their devotion to the service of beauty, he distributed in the order of merit, crowns of roses for the Queen and her Maids of Honor. The knights received the trophies upon their lances and rode away to proffer them, on bended knee to the girls they respectively liked best. Then the air rang with "Money Musk" and "Old Dan Tucker" played with ravishing skill by the smiling musicians.

The tournament ball came off that night in the long dining-room of the Leesburg Inn. The

floor was waxed to a perilous slipperiness and the fireplace banked with flowers. With positive instructions not to accept any invitation to dance, I was nevertheless allowed to look on. I well recall my wistful admiration of the Queen of Love and Beauty, a small, fair creature, with flaxen curls, who wore her blushing honors in a bewildered way as if quite overwhelmed by them.

CHAPTER XX

Conclusion

I HAVE endeavored to set down in the foregoing pages as clearly as possible the impressions of my childhood and the stories that came to me from older people. Looking back upon those early years I seem to have been ideally happy. I believed, and still believe, that no place in the world is superior to Virginia, and that her "old families" are the equals of the highest nobility of other countries. It never occurred to me that their manners and customs could be questioned or that their tranquil oligarchy could be overthrown.

As I grew up I came into the lovely heritage of old Virginia womanhood. The young men of my set had been reared in the fine manners of our class. To them a pretty girl was a queen of her own right, to spare whose dainty feet every one of them was a Raleigh ready to spread his cloak.

Little preparation for life was mine when, several years before the Civil War, I married and went to live in New York, but before the first gun had been fired we returned to Richmond to cast in our lot with our own people. Then it was I

made acquaintance with the primal facts of sickness and death, of poverty, privation and bereavement of which before I had only read in books. The terrible story of those four years has been told again and again and by people who took a more active part in them than I.

To me it was given, while my husband lay in the trenches with the militia company that guarded the city, to stay at home with my little children, eating my heart out with anxiety, and listening with horrid apprehensions to the cannonnading which drew nearer day by day, wondering what shot would leave me a widow, to work and starve and suffer; to turn my old dresses inside out and upside down; to make for my children cloth shoes to which the shoemaker would affix clumsy soles; to braid straw hats, and to gaze with wondering, incredulous eyes at a fashion-book smuggled by a blockade runner into the beleagured town.

How, after four years of sequestration, we women folk looked to those Northern troops gravely marching through the conquered city, I believe no caricaturist has set down, but how *they* looked to *us* is sharply graven in my memory. Not the troops, I mean, but the officers in citizens' clothes, and the women who accompanied them! Of course, bitterness and hatred found expression

in ridicule. An acquaintance of mine, very clever with his pencil, drew a sketch of a "Yankee" dude, exaggerating every peculiarity of his costume. A Northern officer joined the group who were looking at it on a street corner, and exclaimed genially,

"Ha, very good, very good indeed! I must get you to take me off." Whereupon the artist with scornful lip rejoined,

"I think, Sir, you'd better take yourself off."

Dear me, dear me, those old days when the past was swept away and the future lay before us all uncharted! It was lucky we could laugh now and then and answer our conquerors with a jibe instead of a sob.

I have lived now for nearly eighty years and during that period the world has gone through astounding social and industrial changes. Most of the essentials of modern life have come into use since then. I would not go back and face existence without them, yet I cannot help feeling that they have helped to destroy the richness and variety of life and that they make impossible such an atmosphere as I have tried to recreate in these pages; therefore I question whether our descendants will be able to bequeath to theirs any such glamour as invests, for an old woman, those days of the long ago that she so lovingly remembers.

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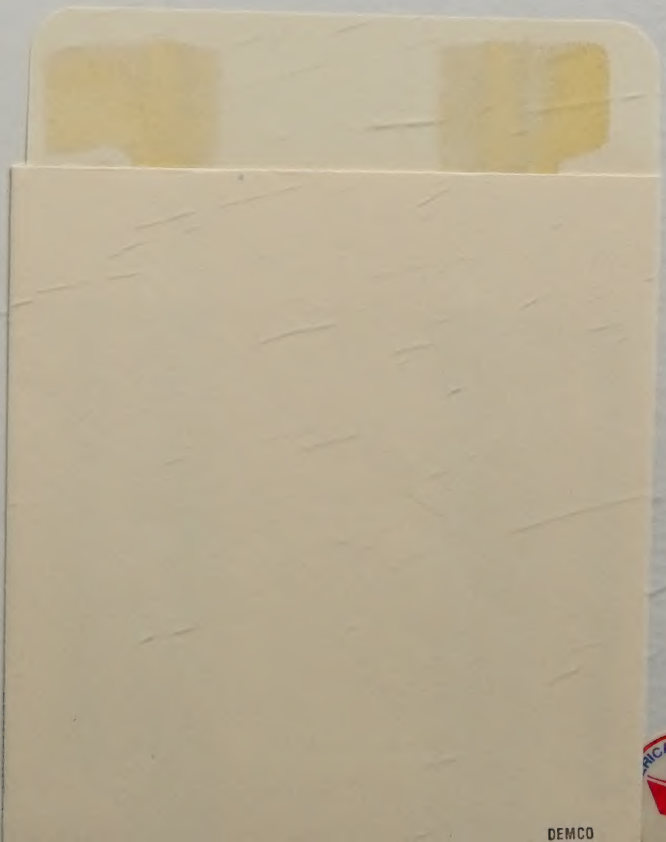

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